00036337

THE
ASIATIC SOCIETY OF BOMBAY
Town Hall, Bombay.

Digitized with financial assistance from the
Government of Maharashtra
on 16 January, 2016

THE

HISTORY OF ITALY,

FROM THE

FALL OF THE WESTERN EMPIRE,

TO THE

36337

COMMENCEMENT OF THE WARS OF THE FRENCH REVOLUTION.

B. 2910

By GEORGE PERCEVAL, Esq.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

LONDON:

PRINTED FOR

G. B. WHITTAKER, AVE-MARIA LANE.

1825.

945
Per/His
36337

TO

CHARLES MILLS, ESQ.

MY DEAR MILLS,

PERMIT me the pleasure of inscribing your name on this work. I need not detail the reasons of private esteem and regard which urge me on this occasion; and no apology will be required for my dedicating these volumes to one, who has performed so much in literature, and from whom so much more is expected. You have already thrown high romantic interest over the stern features of the Crusades; and you have now found a fairer and more brilliant theme in the history and institutions of Chivalry. Those books will naturally be classed together and reflect value on each other; and I shall feel proud

if my attempt to delineate the revolutions of Italy can be associated with that work, in which you have successfully treated the literature and art of the same interesting country.

Believe me,

My dear MILLS,

Very faithfully your's,

G. P.

February 1, 1825.

PREFACE.

In introducing these volumes to the notice of the reader, it is unnecessary to insist upon the general importance of Italian history. Neither need he be reminded of the fact, that our language has hitherto offered no succinct and comprehensive narrative of the prominent vicissitudes in the long tragedy of Italy. I am aware that the deep interest and value of the subject demanded an abler pen: but, I may at least derive encouragement from the reflection, that the present work provokes no comparison, and that, as it has been unattempted by others, it will in some measure fill a void in our historical literature.

Of the luminous chapter, which Mr. Hallam has devoted to Italy, in his view of the state of Europe during the Middle Ages, it is impossible to speak without praise. But it is obvious that minuteness of historical de-

tails is altogether incompatible with the limits and intention of such a sketch; and the Middle Ages are only a part of our subject. Besides, Mr. Hallam's elegant province has been rather to allude to facts for general deductions, than to state them in measured narrative; and some previous acquaintance with Italian history is necessary, before the value of his reflections can be appreciated.

For the substratum of his chapter, Mr. Hallam has taken principally M. Sismondi's History of the Italian Republics; and it might appear, at first sight, that a translation of that beautiful work would best familiarize the English reader with a subject, which its accomplished author has treated with equal fidelity and eloquence. But M. Sismondi's design almost wholly excluded the Italian annals of the first five centuries of modern history, and admitted only very imperfect outlines of those of the last three hundred years. His singular minuteness and even his philosophical digressions, however careful and valuable in themselves, must prevent his book from becoming a manual of historical instruction; and the general student may

complain, that a single division of his inquiries is expanded into sixteen volumes. If prolixity forbade a translation, incompleteness of design rendered a mere abridgement of M. Sismondi's work equally objectionable. There is little temptation to linger amidst the darkness of the first five hundred years which succeeded the fall of the Western Empire; but, that his journey may be complete, the reader will expect to be conducted, however rapidly, over that gloomy waste, which connects the two splendid periods of Italian greatness. And if, since the second fall of Italy, her annals have been for three centuries languid and her fortunes inglorious, their tale will not be the less eagerly demanded. Yet, beyond the ruin of her independence, M. Sismondi has scarcely felt himself called upon to continue his admirable labours; and he has therefore in a great degree, left the completion of Italian story—an ungrateful task, a melancholy consummation,—to inferior spirits.

The English reader, then, would neither have been satisfied with a translation nor an abridgement of M. Sismondi's work; and abandoning the intention of offering either, I

have been contented with consulting, not servilely following him. I have admired his talents, I might have relied upon his scrupulous integrity: I have nevertheless often been compelled to differ from him in opinion; and I have sought for the means of judging for myself among the principal authorities from which his own materials were collected. But I am too conscious of the defects of the present work, to expect credit for all the labour which it has cost me; and I can safely advance no other pretensions than conciseness and accuracy.

CONTENTS

OF

VOLUME I.

CHAPTER I.

FROM THE FALL OF THE WESTERN EMPIRE, TO THE CORONATION OF THE EMPEROR OTHO THE GREAT. A.D. 476—961.

PART I.

Fall of the Western Empire—Reign of Odoacer, King of Italy—Conquest of Italy by the Ostrogoths—Reign of Theodoric the Great—Fall of the Ostrogoth Power—Conquest of Italy by Belisarius and Narses—Government of Narses—Invasion of Italy by the Lombards—KINGDOM OF THE LOMBARDS—State of Italy after its Foundation—Duration and Extinction of the Lombard Dynasty—Conquest of Lombardy by Charlemagne—His Coronation as Emperor of the West—Laws of the Lombards—Feudal System—Alodial Tenures—Benefices—Fiefs or Feuds—Sub-infeudation—State of the feudal Aristocracy—Reign of Charlemagne in Italy—His Power and Character—Successors of Charlemagne—Carlovingian Dynasty in Italy—Its Extinction—Feudal Anarchy in Italy—Berenger I., King of Italy and Emperor—His Death—Incursions of the Saracens and Hungarians—Effects of their Inroads in promoting the Freedom of the

PAGE.

Italian Cities—Hugo, King of Italy—His Deposition—His Son Lothaire, King—His Death—Berenger II. King of Italy—Otho the Great, King of Italy—Berenger his Vassal, deposed—Otho Emperor 1

PART II.

Rise and Growth of Ecclesiastical and Papal Power—Influence of the Clergy over the barbarian Conquerors of Italy—Their Wealth and Power—Origin of the Popedom—Pontificate of Gregory I.—State of Rome from the fifth to the tenth Century—Separation of the Latin and Greek Churches—Donations of Pepin and Charlemagne to the Holy See—Disorders of the Papacy in the ninth and tenth Centuries—Southern Italy—Rise of the Republics of Naples, Gaeta, and Amalfi—History of those States to the tenth Century—Republic of Venice—Its geographical Position—Origin and primitive Constitution of the Republic—Its first War—Change in the Form of Government—First Appointment of a Doge—War of Pepin, Son of Charlemagne, against the Venetians—Their Victory—Building of Venice—Naval Wars of the Republic in the ninth and tenth Centuries—Capture of the Venetian Brides by the Pirates of Istria 39

CHAPTER II.

FROM THE CORONATION OF THE EMPEROR OTHO THE GREAT, TO THE PEACE OF CONSTANCE. A.D. 961—1183.

PART I.

Reigns of Otho the Great, Otho II., and Otho III.—Continued Disorders of the Papacy—Rome under the Consul Crescentius—Probable State of the Lombard Cities during these three Reigns—The Crown of Lombardy disputed between Ardoin, Marquis of Ivrea, and Henry II.,

PAGE

King of Germany—Reign of the Emperor Conrad II. in Italy—Circumstances which introduced the great Struggle between the Empire and the Papacy for Ecclesiastical Investitures—Reign of the Emperor Henry III.—Scandalous State of the Papacy—Reformations—Reign of the Emperor Henry IV.—Pontificate of Gregory VII.—Character of the famous Countess Matilda—Contest between Henry and Gregory—Death of Gregory—The Struggle with Henry continued by his Successors—Deposition and Death of Henry IV.—Reign of the Emperor Henry V.—Prosecution of the Dispute for Ecclesiastical Investitures—Concordat of Worms—Termination of the Contest between the Papacy and Empire—Independence of the Lombard Cities—Their mutual Animosities and Oppressions of each other—Death of the Emperor Henry V.—Disputed Succession to the Empire—State of the Papacy—Reigns of the Emperors Lothaire and Conrad III.—Accession of Frederic Barbarossa to the Imperial Crown—His Character and ambitious Designs—Entrance of Frederic into Italy—Wars between the Emperor and the Milanese—Blockade and Submission of Milan—Arbitrary Conduct of Frederic—Revolt of the Milanese—Second Blockade and Destruction of Milan—Subsequent Tyranny of Frederic over the Cities of Lombardy—Resistance of the Cities and general League against Frederic—Rebuilding of Milan—Battle of Legnano—Establishment of the Independence of Lombardy—Peace of Constance .. 65

PART II.

Southern Italy—State of the Greek and Lombard Possessions in the tenth Century—The Normans—First Appearance of their Pilgrims in Italy—Their Exploits and Settlement at Aversa, near Naples, and Conquest of Apulia—War of Pope Leo IX. against the Normans—His Defeat and Captivity—Robert Guiscard, Duke of Apulia and Calabria—Norman Conquest of Sicily—Roger I., Great Count of Sicily—Successors of Robert Guiscard

—Extinction of the direct Line of his Family—Roger II., Great Count of Sicily, and Duke of Calabria and Apulia—Subjugation of the Campanian Republics—Ruin of Amalfi—Submission of Gaeta and Naples—Roger II., King of the Two Sicilies by papal Investiture—His Death—William I. the Bad, and William II. the Good, Kings of the Sicilies—REPUBLICS OF VENICE, PISA, AND GENOA—General Advance of the Power and Wealth of Venice—Acquisition of Dalmatia by the Republic—Changes in the Venetian Constitution—Establishment of the great Council, and of the little Council and Senate—Severe Restrictions on the Powers of the Doges—Form of ducal Elections—Pisa—Her early Commerce and Enterprises—Her Conquest of Sardinia and the Balearic Isles—Genoa—Connection of her early History with that of Pisa—Her Conquest of Corsica—Constitution of the Pisan and Genoese Republics—Furious Wars between the two States—Part taken by Venice, Pisa, and Genoa in the Crusades—Consequent Wealth of these Republics

CHAPTER III.

FROM THE PEACE OF CONSTANCE, TO THE EXTINCTION OF THE HOUSE OF SWABIA. A.D. 1183—1268.

PART I.

State of the Lombard Cities after the Peace of Constance—Last Years of Frederic Barbarossa—Reign of the Emperor Henry VI.—Affairs of Naples and Sicily—Acquisition of those Countries by Henry VI.—His Cruelties and Death—Aspect of Italy at the Close of the twelfth Century—Occurrences in the Trevisan March—Rise of the Families of Romano and Este—Factions of the Guelfs and Ghibelins—Pontificate of Innocent III.—His Exercise of arbitrary Authority over temporal Princes—Ambitious Schemes of Innocent in Italy—League of Tuscany

PAGE

—Interregnum in the Empire—Otho IV.—His Contest with Innocent III.—Continued Wars between the Lombard Cities—The Emperor Frederic II.—State of his Kingdom of the Sicilies—Crusade of Frederic—Excommunication against him—Return of Frederic to Europe—Papal Intrigues—Renewal of the League of Lombardy—Singular Power of a Dominican Friar—War between the Emperor and the Lombard League—Extinction of Ecelin in the Trevisan March—Papal Persecution of Frederic II.—Council of Lyons—Sentence of Deposition against the Emperor—Unshaken Power, Death, and Character of Frederic II. 149

PART II.

Conrad IV. Son of Frederic II.—His Reign over the Sicilies, and Death—Papal Invasion of the Sicilies—Internal State of Rome—The Senator Brancaleone—Cruelties of Eccelino da Romano—Crusade against Eccelino—Fall and Death of the Tyrant—Fall of the Lombard Republics—Changes in the Military Art—Manfred, King of the Sicilies—Projects of the Popes against him—Invasion of the Sicilies by Charles of Anjou—Battle of Grandella—Death of Manfred—Charles of Anjou, King of the Sicilies—Enterprise and Execution of Conradin—Extinction of the House of Swabia 183

PART III.

Republic of Florence—Natural Advantages and commercial Prosperity of the City—First Dissensions at Florence—Establishment of the popular Constitution—Expulsion of the Ghibelin Nobles—Civil War—Battle of the Arbia—Revengeful Spirit and Tyranny of the Ghibelin Conquerors—Deliverance of Florence—Settlement of the Constitution—Maritime Italian Republics—Venice—Her Share in the Latin Conquest of the Eastern Empire—Splendid Acquisitions of the Republic—Exten-

PAGE

sion of Venetian Commerce—Affairs of the Venetian Colonies—Connection of the Republic with the Latin Empire of the East—Pisa—Genoa—Her internal Distractions—Furious Naval Wars between the Genoese and Venetians 208

CHAPTER IV.

FROM THE EXTINCTION OF THE HOUSE OF SWABIA, TO THE MIDDLE OF THE FOURTEENTH CENTURY. A.D. 1268–1350.

PART I.

State of Italy after the Extinction of the Swabian Family—Cruelty, Ambition, and Power of Charles of Anjou—Pontificate of Gregory X.—His [illegible] to reconcile the Italian Factions—Troubles at Genoa and in other Quarters—Story of Imilda de' Lambertazzi—Papal Jealousy excited by Charles of Anjou—Rodolph of Hapsburg, Emperor—Nicholas III.—His Policy—Cession of Romagna, &c. to the Holy See—Affairs of Sicily, Giovanni di Procida—The Sicilian Vespers—General Revolt of the Island from Charles of Anjou—Naval Defeat of Charles—Peter of Aragon, King of Sicily also—Last Years, Humiliation, and Death of Charles—Affairs of Lombardy—Rise of the Visconti—Tuscany—Grandeur of Pisa—War between Pisa and Genoa—Battle of Meloria, and Extinction of the Naval Power of Pisa—Story of Count Ugolino—Affairs of Pisa after his Death—Florence—Creation of the Priors of Arts—Lawless Spirit of the Nobles—Enactments against them, Ordinances of Justice, &c.—Factions of the Black and White Guelfs—Fall of the latter Party—Banishment of Dante 239

PART II.

Affairs of the Pontificate—Boniface VIII.—Continued Wars for the Possession of Sicily—Charles II. of Naples—

PAGE

Frederic, King of Sicily—Miserable End of Boniface VIII.—Translation of the Popedom to Avignon—Condition of Lombardy at the Beginning of the Fourteenth Century—Frequent Revolutions—Numerous petty Signors or Tyrants—Power and Reverses of Matteo Visconti—Growth of Respect in Italy for the imperial Authority—The Emperor Henry VII. in Italy—Submission of Lombardy to his Authority—New Troubles in that Province—Guelf League formed by Florence against the Emperor—Critical Situation, Activity, and Death of Henry VII.—Robert, King of Naples—His Projects of universal Sovereignty over Italy—Wars between the Guelfs and Ghibelins in Tuscany—Rise of Castruccio Castracani, Prince of Lucca—Hostilities in Lombardy—Successes of the Ghibelins—Siege of Genoa—Grandeur of Matteo Visconti—His Death—Successes of Castruccio Castracani—Danger of Florence and the Tuscan Guelfs—The Emperor Louis IV. of Bavaria in Italy—Brilliant Fortunes and Death of Castruccio—Rise of the House of Gonzaga at Mantua..... 285

PART III.

Domestic Affairs of Florence—Changes in her Constitution—Sudden Power acquired in Italy by John, King of Bohemia—League excited by Florence against him—Success of the Confederates—Abandonment of Italy by the King of Bohemia—Treachery and Power of Mastino della Scala, Lord of Verona—League formed by Florence and Venice against him—His Humiliation—Prosperity of Florence—War with Pisa—Discontent at Florence—Arrival of the Duke of Athens in the City—His Elevation to Power—Subversion of the Republic—Florence under the Tyranny of the Duke of Athens—Numerous Conspiracies against him—Fall of the Tyrant—Restoration of Freedom—Affairs of Naples and Sicily—Last Years and Death of Robert, King of Naples—Joanna, Queen of

PAGE

Naples—Murder of her Husband Andrew—Louis, King of Hungary, the Avenger of his Brother Andrew—His Conquest of Naples—Subsequent War and Pacification between Joanna and Louis—Re-establishment of Joanna in her Kingdom—State of Rome during the Absence of the Popes at Avignon—Private Wars and Crimes of the Nobles—Cola di Rienzi—Excites the Citizens to a successful Insurrection—His Government as Tribune of the People—Good Effects of the Revolution—Extraordinary Reputation of Rienzi—Enthusiasm of Petrarch—Errors and Fall of the Tribune—His subsequent Fortunes, second Administration, and violent Death—General Dearth in Europe in the Middle of the Fourteenth Century, followed by the Great Pestilence—Frightful Ravages of the latter in Italy—REPUBLICS OF GENOA AND VENICE—Their Rivalry—Sovereignty over the Adriatic asserted by Venice—Annual Ceremony of wedding the Adriatic—Wars between Genoa and Venice—Changes in the Venetian Constitution—Closing of the Great Council—Final Establishment of the Oligarchy—Conspiracies against its Usurpations—Institution of the Council of Ten—Its despotic Powers—Increased Vigour of the Republic under its Direction—Its mysterious Tyranny over Venice—Domestic Fortunes of Genoa—Creation of the First Doge . . 324

CHAPTER V.

FROM THE MIDDLE, TO THE END OF THE FOURTEENTH CENTURY. A.D. 1350—1400.

PART I.

Political State of Italy at the Middle of the Fourteenth Century—Military System—Exclusive Employment of foreign Mercenaries—Companies of Adventure—Invention of Gunpowder and Cannon—Affairs of Genoa and Venice—Their Commerce in the Black Sea—Furious

PAGE

War between the Republics—Great naval Battle in the Bosphorus—Battle of Loiéra—Total Defeat of the Genoese Fleet—Genoa surrenders her Liberty to the Lord of Milan, and continues the War with Venice—Destruction of the Venetian Squadron at Sapienza—Termination of the War—Marin Falieri, Doge of Venice—Conspires against the Oligarchy, and is beheaded—Unfortunate War of Venice with the King of Hungary—Loss of Dalmatia—Affairs of Tuscany—War between Florence and the Lord of Milan—Siege of Scarperia—Peace between Florence and Milan—The Great Company of Adventure levy Tribute in Tuscany—War among the Lombard Signors—The Emperor Charles IV. in Italy—Continued War in Lombardy—Fortunes of Pavia—Crimes of the Visconti—Prosperity of Tuscany—War between Florence and Pisa—The White, or English Company of Adventure—Sir John Hawkwood 392

PART II.

Affairs of the Pontificate—Conquest of Romagna by the Holy See—Scandal of the papal Residence at Avignon—Pope Urban V.—Restoration of the Seat of the Popedom to Rome—Alliance between the Emperor Charles IV. and Urban V.—League against the Visconti—Arrival of Charles IV. in Italy—His disgraceful Conduct in Lombardy and Tuscany—His Sale of Freedom to Lucca—Revival of that Republic—Grandeur of Urban V.—New Wars provoked by the Visconti—Return of the Pope to Avignon—His Death—War between Florence and the Church—Revolt of Romagna—Arrival of Pope Gregory XI. at Rome—His Death—Election of a new Pope—Violence of the Roman Populace—Urban VI. chosen by the Conclave—His offensive Conduct to the Cardinals—Their Secession—They annul the Election of Urban VI. and substitute Clement VII.—Question on the Validity of Urban's Title—The Great Schism of the West—Domestic Affairs of Florence—Factions of the Ricci and

PAGE

Albizzi—The Guelf Corporation—Tyranny of that Oligarchy—The Albizzi, Chiefs of the Guelf Aristocracy—The Ricci, Leaders of the democratical Party—Insurrection of the democratical Faction—Fall of the Guelf Aristocracy—Sedition of the Ciompi—Florence in the Hands of a Mob—Anarchy in the Republic—Patriotism of Michel di Lando—Restoration of Order—Triumph of the democratical Faction—Administration of its Leaders—Their judicial Murders, Tyranny, and Fall—Restoration of the Guelf Oligarchy to Power—Affairs of Venice—Rupture of the Republic with Genoa—Powerful League against Venice—War of Chiozza—Naval Operations—Total Defeat of the Venetian Fleet—The Entrance into the Lagunes of Venice forced by the Genoese Fleet—Capture of Chiozza—Extremity of Venice—Courageous Spirit of the Senate and People—Their energetic Exertions to equip a Fleet, and skilful Operations—The Genoese blockaded in the Lagune—Increase of the Venetian Force and Confidence—Surrender of the Genoese Fleet—Continuation of the War—Peace of Turin..... 445

PART III.

Affairs of Lombardy—Gian Galeazzo Visconti, Lord of Milan—War between the Signors of Verona and Padua—Interference of Gian Galeazzo in their Quarrel—His Overthrow of the House of Scala—His Projects against the House of Carrara—Conquest and Partition of their States—Alarming Power of Gian Galeazzo—His ambitious Designs in Tuscany—War between Florence and the Lord of Milan, and their Allies—Fortunes of Francesco Novello da Carrara—His Re-establishment in the Lordship of Padua—Prosecution of the War betwen Florence and the Lord of Milan—Defeat of the Count d'Armagnac, the Ally of Florence—Skilful Retreat of Hawkwood—Peace of Genoa—Perfidious Character and Intrigues of Gian Galeazzo Visconti—Erection of Milan into an imperial Duchy—New War between Florence

PAGE

and the Duke of Milan, terminated by a Truce—Successful Machinations of Gian Galeazzo—Pisa subjected to his Yoke—The Signiory of Sienna and Perugia surrendered to him—Decline of the Spirit of Freedom—Italy in Danger of falling under the universal Tyranny of the Duke of Milan—Revolutions of Genoa—Rise of the commercial Aristocracy—Recovery of the Republic from the Milanese Yoke—Struggles of Faction—Incessant Revolutions, and Exhaustion of the Republic—Surrender of the State to the Protection of Charles VI. of France—Affairs of Naples—Continuation of the Reign of Joanna—Condition of Sicily—Charles of Durazzo adopted by Joanna for her Successor—His Rupture with her, and Enterprise against her Throne in Concert with Urban VI.—Adoption of the Duke of Anjou by Joanna—Conquest of Naples by Charles of Durazzo—Murder of Joanna—Expedition of Louis of Anjou into Naples—His Failure and Death—Reign of Charles III.—His Attempt to seize the Crown of Hungary, and Murder—Civil Wars in Naples between the Parties of Anjou and Durazzo—Louis II. (of Anjou)—Ladislaus (Son of Charles III.)—His Character and Success against his Rival—His final Establishment on the Throne..... 520

CONTENTS

OF

VOLUME II.

CHAPTER VI.

FROM THE BEGINNING, TO THE MIDDLE OF THE FIFTEENTH CENTURY. A.D. 1400—1450.

PART I.

PAGE

State of Italy at the Opening of the Fifteenth Century—Overwhelming Power of Gian Galeazzo, Duke of Milan—Continued Resistance of Florence to his Projects—Expedition of the Emperor Robert—Revolution in the military System of Italy—School of Italian Generals—Discomfiture of the German Chivalry—Evacuation of Lombardy by the Emperor—Danger of Florence—Death of Gian Galeazzo—Dismemberment of the Milanese States—Restoration of the political Balance in Italy—Conquests of Francesco da Carrara, Lord of Padua—Hatred and Jealousy of the Venetians towards him—Their last War against him—Gallant Defence of Carrara—Fall of Padua to the Venetians—Murder of Francesco da Carrara and his Sons in the Prisons of Venice—Extinction of the House of Carrara and Scala—The Possessions of Venice extended to the Adige—Florence—Her iniquitous Purchase of the Signiory of Pisa—Resist-

PAGE

ance of the Pisans—Blockade of their City—Sufferings and Fortitude of the Inhabitants—Subjugation of Pisa by Florence—Papal Affairs—Progress of the Great Schism—Successors of Urban VI.; Boniface IX., Innocent VII., Gregory XII.—Eager Desire of Europe for the Re-union of the Church—Benedict XIII., the Successor of Clement VII. at Avignon—His Efforts to prolong the Schism—Mutual Evasions of Gregory XII. and Benedict XIII.—Council of Pisa—Deposition of Gregory XII. and Benedict XIII.—Election of Alexander V.—Resistance of the deposed Pontiffs—The Schism rendered more desperate—Ladislaus, King of Naples—Insidiously interferes in the Affairs of Rome, and occupies that Capital and the papal Territory—His ambitious Designs—War of Florence against him—Successes of the Republic—Ladislaus driven from Rome—New Expedition of Louis II. of Anjou against Naples—Battle of Rocca Secca—Defeat and Danger of Ladislaus—His final Triumph over Louis, and Peace with his Enemies—His Treachery, Sack of Rome, and new Conquest of the Papal States—Power of Ladislaus—Italy in Danger of his universal Tyranny—His Death—Scandal excited in Europe by the Continuance of the Great Schism—Infamous Reputation of Pope John XXIII., the Successor of Alexander V. The Emperor Sigismund—His laudable Efforts to give Peace to the Church—Council of Constance—Deposition of John XXIII.—Resignation of Gregory XII.—Deposition of Benedict XIII.—Election of Martin V.—Termination of the Great Schism of the Church—Affairs of Lombardy—Continued Anarchy in that Province after the Death of Gian Galeazzo—Giovanni Maria, Duke of Milan—His Atrocities and Assassination—Filippo Maria, Duke of Milan—Revival of the Milanese Power—Cruel Ingratitude of Filippo Maria to his Duchess—His Acquisition of the Signiory of Genoa, and Conquests in Lombardy—Encounter between the Milanese and Swiss—Battle of Arbedo—Grandeur of Filippo Maria 1

PART II.

PAGE

Florence—Her Prosperity—Aggressions of the Duke of Milan—War between Filippo Maria and Florence—Successive Defeats of the Republic—Venice—Change in her Policy—Successful Pursuit of continental Dominion—Its doubtful Advantage—The Aid of Venice solicited by the Florentines—Francesco Carmagnola, injuriously treated by Filippo Maria, retires to Venice and determines her on War—League formed by Florence and Venice—Repeated Wars of the Two Republics against the Duke of Milan—Successes of Carmagnola—His Victory at Macalo—His Reverses—Atrocious Ingratitude of Venice to her General—Execution of Carmagnola—Third Peace of Ferrara—Splendid Acquisitions of Venice—Reign of Joanna II. of Naples—Rivalry of the Great Condottieri, Sforza Attendolo and Braccio di Montone—Louis III. of Anjou, invited by the Pope and Sforza to dethrone Joanna—Her Adoption of Alfonso of Aragon—War between the Aragonese and Angevin Parties—Rupture between the Queen and Alfonso—Her Substitution of Louis of Anjou for her Heir—Death of Sforza and Braccio—Last Years and Death of Joanna II.—Domestic Affairs of Florence—Grandeur of the Republic under the Guelf Oligarchy—Character of their Administration—Revival of the democratical Party—Rise of the Medici—Giovanni—And Cosmo—His Banishment and triumphant Recall—Fall of the Oligarchy—Establishment of Cosmo de' Medici in the Direction of the State—Disputed Succession to the Crown of Naples—Contest between Alfonso of Aragon and Regnier of Anjou—Establishment of Alfonso on the Neapolitan Throne—Genoa recovers her Liberty—New War between the Duke of Milan and the Republics of Florence and Venice—Rise of Francesco Sforza—Peace of Martinengo—Pontificate of Eugenius IV.—League formed against Francesco Sforza—His gallant Defence and Reverses—Sforza succoured by Venice

PAGE

and Florence—War of the Republics against the Duke of Milan—Death of the Duke Filippo Maria—The People of Milan establish a Republic—Their numerous Enemies—Sforza enters their Service—His Victories and Treachery—He leagues with the Venetians against his Employers—Dissensions at Milan—The City besieged by Sforza, declares in his Favor—Francesco Sforza, Duke of Milan—Rise of the House of Savoy—Its Origin—The Counts of Maurienne and of Savoy—Commencement of their Power in Piedmont—State of that Province before the Fifteenth Century—Piedmont under the Dominion of the Counts of Savoy—Amadeus VIII., the First Duke of his House 67

CHAPTER VII.

FROM THE MIDDLE OF THE FIFTEENTH CENTURY, TO THE ENTRANCE INTO ITALY OF CHARLES VIII. KING OF FRANCE. A.D. 1450—1494.

PART I.

Change in the System of Italian Alliances on the Accession of Francesco Sforza to the Milanese Throne—League of Alfonso of Naples and Venice, against the Duke of Milan and Florence—General War in Italy—Capture of Constantinople by the Turks—Consternation and Danger of Italy—Peace of Lodi—Quadruple League of Naples, Milan, Florence, and Venice—Pontificate of Nicholas V. —Abortive Conspiracy of Stefano Porcari—Incessant Troubles and Revolutions of Genoa—War of Alfonso of Naples against the Republic—His Death and Character —Unpopularity of his Son Ferdinand—The Barons of Naples offer their Crown to the House of Anjou—Obstinate Civil War in their Kingdom between the Parties of Anjou and Aragon—Share of other Italian Powers in the Contest—Final Triumph of Ferdinand—General Re-

PAGE

pose of Italy—Affairs of Venice—Story of the Foscari—Institution of the Inquisitors of State—Danger of Venice from the Growth of the Ottoman Power—War between the Republic and the Turks—Crusade projected by Pope Pius II. against the Infidels—His Death—Pope Paul II. —Conquest of Negropont by the Turks—Alarm of Italy —League against the Infidels—Its abortive Results—Entrance of the Turks into Italy—Close of the War between Venice and the Ottomans—The Genoese lose their Possessions in the Black Sea—Acquisition of Cyprus by the Venetians 136

PART II.

Domestic Affairs of Florence—Government of Cosmo de' Medici—His Death and Character—Piero de' Medici—Struggles against his Authority—Final Establishment of the sovereign Influence of the Medici—Death of Piero—Lorenzo and Giuliano de' Medici—Conspiracy of the Pazzi—Pope Sixtus IV.—His Share in the Plot—Murder of Giuliano de' Medici—Overthrow of the Conspirators—Lorenzo de' Medici, sole Ruler of Florence—State of the Milanese Duchy—Death of Francesco Sforza —Reign of his Son, Galeazzo Maria—His Crimes, and violent Death—Minority of his Son, Gian Galeazzo—Continued Persecution of Lorenzo de' Medici by Sixtus IV.—Unjust War against Florence undertaken by that Pope and the King of Naples—Their Intrigues to deprive the Florentines of the Milanese Alliance—Ludovico Sforza usurps the Government of Milan in the Name of the young Duke—Progress of the War against Florence —Disasters of that State—Discontent of the People—Mission to the King of Naples, generously hazarded by Lorenzo de' Medici—He persuades Ferdinand to conclude Peace with Florence—The Condition of that State still critical—Landing of a Turkish Army near Otranto —Universal Terror of Italy—Peace granted by the Pope to Florence—Abrupt Termination of the Turkish Enter-

PAGE

prise—Renewed Ambition of Sixtus IV.—His League with Venice to despoil the House of Este—New War thus excited in Italy—Its Progress—Peace of Bagnolo —Death of Sixtus IV.—Pope Innocent VIII.—His Quarrel with the King of Naples—Discontent of the Neapolitan Nobles against Ferdinand—Their Revolt, supported by the Pope—Alliance of Florence and Milan with Ferdinand—General War in Italy—Bloodless Encounter at Lamentana—Innocent terrified into Peace—Subsequent Cruelties of Ferdinand against his Barons—War of Sarzana between Genoa and Florence—Genoa relapses under the Yoke of Milan—General Repose of Italy—Last Years of Lorenzo de' Medici—His final Destruction of Florentine Liberty—The Honor of the State sacrificed to save him from Bankruptcy—His Death—Estimate of the Character of Lorenzo de' Medici—Prognostics of a new Æra in the political Condition of Europe—Selfish and vicious Characters of the Rulers of Italy—Pope Alexander VI.—Attempt of Ludovico Sforza to form a League for the Protection of Italy against Foreigners, frustrated by the Vanity of Piero de' Medici—Alarm of Sforza at the Disposition of the King of Naples to protect his Nephew Gian Galeazzo—He invites Charles VIII. of France into Italy—Claims of Charles to the Crown of Naples—His Treaty with Ludovico Sforza—Preparations of Ferdinand of Naples for Defence—His Death—Alfonso II. of Naples, pursues his Father's Measures—Commencement of Hostilities—Entrance of Charles VIII. into Italy 184

CHAPTER VIII.

FROM THE INVASION OF CHARLES VIII., TO THE SUBJECTION OF ITALY TO THE EMPEROR CHARLES V. A.D. 1494—1530.

PART I.

Unopposed March of Charles VIII.—The Milanese Crown assumed by Ludovico Sforza on the Death of his Nephew —Entrance of the French Army into Tuscany—Disaffection of the Florentines against Piero de' Medici—His abject Submission to Charles VIII.—Expulsion of the Medici from Florence—The Pisans permitted by Charles VIII. to throw off the Yoke of Florence—Advance of Charles VIII. towards Rome—Terror and Submission of Alexander VI.—Entrance of Charles into Rome—Amount and Composition of his Army—Dismay of Alfonso II. of Naples, at the Approach of the French—His Abdication and Flight—Ferdinand II. King of Naples—His vain Efforts to defend his Throne—He retires to Ischia—Conquest of Naples by Charles VIII.—Imprudent Security of the French Monarch—Alarm of the Italian Powers at his Success—League of Venice against him—Danger of his Situation—He resolves to return to France with a Part of his Army—Narrative of his March —Battle of Fornova—Glorious Victory of Charles VIII. over the Italian League—He concludes Peace with Milan, and re-passes the Alps into France—Ferdinand II. attacks the French Troops in Naples, and recovers that Kingdom —His Death—Frederic, King of Naples—War of Pisa for the Maintenance of her Freedom against Florence—Share of other Powers in the Contest—General Truce in Europe—Singular State of Florence at this Epoch—Rise of the Fanatic Savonarola—He acquires a prodigious Ascendancy over the People—His despotic Authority in the State—Curious Occasion of his Fall—Charles VIII. of France succeeded by Louis XII.—Claims of Louis

PAGE

upon the Crown of Milan, as well as that of Naples—Conquest of the Milanese Duchy by the French—Captivity and End of Ludovico Sforza—Crimes of Pope Alexander VI. and his Son, Cæsar Borgia—Condition of Romagna—Conquest of that Province by Cæsar Borgia—Designs of Louis XII. upon Naples—His Treaty with Ferdinand the Catholic for the Partition of that Kingdom—Iniquity of this Alliance—Conquest of Naples by the French and Spaniards—Fate of Frederic of Naples—Extinction of the Aragonese Dynasty of Naples—Quarrel of the French and Spaniards over their Spoil—Battles of Cerignoles and of the Garigliano—Expulsion of the French from Naples—Truce between France and Spain—Establishment of the long Dominion of Spain over Naples—Continued Atrocities and Success of Cæsar Borgia—Death of Alexander VI.—Reverses of Borgia—Pope Julius II.—Fall of Cæsar Borgia—Story of his End—Repose and Servitude of Italy—Julius II. re-establishes the papal Power in Romagna—Transient War of Maximilian, Emperor-elect, against France and Venice—Continued Struggle of the Pisans against the Florentine Yoke—Their valiant Resistance—Final Subjugation of their City—Review of the Condition and Policy of Venice—Her late War with the Turks—The hatred of numerous Enemies provoked by her continental Aggrandizement—General Coalition in Europe against her—League of Cambray—Presumptuous Confidence of the Republic—Commencement of Hostilities—Battle of Aignadello—Total Defeat of the Venetians—Their continental Provinces rapidly overrun by the Confederates—Abject Despair of the Venetians—The League gradually dissolved by their Submission—Julius II. reconciled with them—Revival of the Fortunes of Venice—Re-capture of Padua—Fruitless Siege of that City by the Confederates under the Emperor Maximilian—Re-establishment of the Venetian Affairs 251

PART II.

PAGE

Resolution of Julius II. to expel the French from Italy—First Hostilities—Abortive Council of Pisa, summoned by Louis XII. and the Emperor against the Pope—The Holy League formed by Julius II. against the French—Distress of Louis XII.—General War in Italy—Exploits of Gaston de Foix—Sanguinary Battle of Ravenna—Victory of the French—Death of Gaston de Foix—The Fortune of the French in Italy perishes with him—Their Expulsion from the Peninsula—The Freedom of Genoa restored—Maximilian Sforza placed on the Throne of Milan—Disunion of the Powers of the Holy League—Death of Julius II.—Pope Leo X.—Retrospect of Florentine Affairs since the Expulsion of the Medici—Restoration of that Family—Servitude of the State—Affairs of Italy during the Pontificate of Leo X.—Last Enterprise of Louis XII. of France—His Reconciliation with the Papacy, and Death—The Accession of Francis I. to the French Crown, introduces a Period of more comprehensive Policy and Warfare in Europe—Impossibility of tracing its Vicissitudes with Minuteness in this Work—General Sketch of its Events—Conquest of the Milanese Duchy by Francis I.—Deposition of Maximilian Sforza—Death of Ferdinand the Catholic—Succession of his Grandson Charles to the Spanish Dominions—General Peace in Italy—Competition of Charles of Spain and Francis I. for the Imperial Crown—Alliance of the Pope and the Emperor Charles V. against Francis I.—Conquest of the Milanese Duchy by the Confederates—Death of Leo X.—Continued and unsuccessful Enterprises of Francis I. in Italy—Francesco Sforza, Duke of Milan—Pope Adrian VI.—Pope Clement VII.—Disastrous Consequences of the Battle of Pavia to Italy—Charles V. all-powerful in the Peninsula—Attempt of the Italian Powers to resist his Yoke—Treachery of the Marquis of Pescara—General League of Italy for the Recovery of

PAGE

Independence—Its impotent Results—Fatal Misconduct and Vacillation of Clement VII.—Sack of Rome by the Imperialists—Condition of Genoa—Fortunes and Character of Andrea Doria—He restores the Republic, under the Protection of Charles V.—His magnanimous Patriotism—Desertion of the Italian League by Clement VII. and Francis I.; by the Treaty of Barcelona, and Peace of Cambray—Final Subjection of Italy to the Emperor Charles V.—Last Struggle of the Florentine Republic—The Medici—Their second Expulsion from Florence—Renewal of the Republican Constitution—Resolution of the Florentines to maintain their Liberties against the Emperor and the Medici—Their gallant and protracted Defence—Fall of Florence—Alessandro de' Medici, first Duke of Florence—Extinction of the Republic 323

CHAPTER IX.

STATE OF ITALY DURING THE REMAINDER OF THE SIXTEENTH CENTURY. A.D. 1530—1600.

Insignificance of Italian History after the Subjugation of the Peninsula by Charles V.—General Affairs of Italy after that Epoch, until the Peace of Cateau Cambresis: a Period of frequent Wars—The Limits and Existence of the Italian States regulated by the Treaty of Cateau Cambresis—Italy ceases to be the Theatre of European Contest; and remains undisturbed by Wars to the Close of the sixteenth Century—Oppression and Misery of her People—Particular and domestic Fortunes of the different Italian States during all this Period—Naples and Milan—Oppressive Character and ruinous Influence of the Spanish Administration in those States—Repeated and vain Attempts to establish the Spanish Inquisition in them—The Popedom—Decline of its Splendour—Suc-

PAGE

cession of Pontiffs—Paul IV.—Change introduced by him in the Objects of papal Policy—The Popes, the Persecutors of the reformed Faith—Mal-administration of their own States—Brief Interval of vigorous Government —Sixtus V.—Grandeur of his Character—Rise of the Ducal House of Parma—Pietro Luigi Farnése, Son of Pope Paul III., the first Duke—His Assassination—Reverses of Ottavio, his Son and Successor—The Grandeur of the House of Farnése established by Alessandro, the famous Prince of Parma—Ferrara and Modena—Extinction of the Legitimate Line of Este—Ferrara annexed to the Holy See—Decay of that Capital and Duchy—The Seat of the House of Este transferred to Modena—Mantua—Annexation of Montferrat to that Duchy—Savoy—Unfortunate Reign of Duke Charles III.—Spoliation of his States—His Son, Emmanuel Philibert, restores the Fortunes of his House—His glorious and pacific Reign—Charles Emmanuel I.—Succeeds in closing the Gates of Italy against the French—Tuscany —Government of Florence after the Extinction of the Republic—Alessandro de' Medici, the first Duke or Doge—His Tyranny and Excesses—His Assassination by his Cousin Lorenzino—Cosmo de' Medici, his Successor; triumphs over the last Effort of the Republican Exiles, and treats them with merciless Cruelty—He acquires the Sovereignty of Sienna—Fall of that Republic —Cosmo I. created Grand-duke of Tuscany—Fearful Tragedy in his Family—His Son, the Grand-duke Francesco—His atrocious System of Assassinations—His Marriage with Bianca Capello, "Daughter of the Venetian Republic"—Romantic Story of that Lady—The Grand-duke and his Duchess poisoned by his Brother, the Cardinal Ferdinando—Reign of Ferdinando, Grand-duke of Tuscany—Lucca—Establishment of the Oligarchy of that Republic—Genoa—Aristocratical Constitution promoted by Andrea Doria—Popular Discontents—Conspiracy of Fiesco—Its successful Execution, rendered abortive by the Death of its Leader—Final Consolida-

PAGE

tion of the Genoese Oligarchy—VENICE—Unimpaired Vigour of her Oligarchical Despotism; and internal Tranquillity of the State—Decay of the foreign Power of the Republic—Neutrality wisely observed by her Senate; but twice interrupted during this Period by Turkish Wars—The first of these, concluded by the Loss of several Colonies—The second, a yet more ruinous Struggle—Conquest of Cyprus by the Turks—League of Christian Powers with Venice against the Infidels—Great Battle of Lepanto—That Victory of the League, entirely without Fruits—Peace purchased by Venice with the Loss of Cyprus 330

CHAPTER X.

STATE OF ITALY DURING THE SEVENTEENTH CENTURY. A.D. 1600—1700.

PART I.

General Aspect of Italy in the Seventeenth Century—Confirmed Degradation of the People—Total Corruption of Italian Manners—Cecisbeism—The unimportant political Fortunes of the Peninsula during this Century; best described in noticing the Affairs of its States under separate Heads—THE SPANISH PROVINCES OF ITALY—Milan and Sardinia—Naples—Rapacious Oppression and Maladministration of the Spanish Government in that Kingdom—General Discontent of the People—Singular and abortive Conspiracy of the monastic Orders in Calabria—The Neapolitans driven to revolt by Want and Misery—Furious Insurrection of the Populace of the Capital, headed by the Fisherman Masaniello—Fearful Power of that Demagogue—The Viceroy compelled to yield to the Insurgents—He obtains the Assassination of Masaniello—The aggravated Perfidy of the Spaniards, produces

PAGE

new Bloodshed and successful Revolt—The Neapolitans determine to erect a Republic—Divisions among the People—Termination of the Insurrection—The Spanish Despotism re-established with signal Cruelty, and maintained to the End of the Century—Sicily—Its Fate similar to that of the Sister Kingdom of Naples—Ineffectual Insurrection at Palermo—More serious Revolt of Messina—The Spanish Governor expelled—The Messinese declare Louis XIV. of France, King of Sicily—Progress of the Contest of Messina between France and Spain—Louis XIV. basely and cruelly deserts the Messinese—Their accumulated Miseries—Merciless Punishment of their Revolt by the Spanish Government—Decay of Messina—THE POPEDOM—Succession of Pontiffs—Paul V.—His abortive Attempts to revive the ancient Pretensions of the Holy See—Urban VIII.—War of the Barberini—The Duchy of Urbino annexed to the Papacy; and the Fiefs of Castro and Ronciglione also—Alexander VII.—Quarrel respecting the Privileges of the French Embassy at Rome—Insolent Pretensions of Louis XIV., maintained by the Humiliation of the Holy See—Innocent XI.—The Dignity of the Papacy again violated by Louis XIV.—The French King at length relaxes in his Pretensions—Unimportant Pontificates of the Successors of Innocent XI.—PARMA—Reigns of the Dukes Ranuccio I.—Odoard—and Ranuccio II.—Sloth and hereditary Corpulence of the Princes of Farnése—Approaching Extinction of their Line—MODENA—Reigns of Cesare—Alfonso III.—Francesco I.—Alfonso IV.—Francesco II.—and Rinaldo of Este—MANTUA—General War caused by the disputed Succession to that Duchy—Disgraceful Reign and abandoned Character of Ferdinand Charles, the last Duke—TUSCANY—Reign of the Arch-duke Ferdinando I.—His Encouragement of commercial Industry in his States—He founds the Prosperity of Leghorn; and amasses immense Treasures—His Son, Cosmo II. pursues his enlightened Policy—Ferdinando II.—The Treasury drained by furnishing Subsidies to the

PAGE

House of Austria—Extinction of the political Importance of Tuscany—Reign of Cosmo III.—Florence, the Seat of gloomy Superstition 444

PART II.

Savoy—General Character of its Princes and their Government—Charles Emmanuel I.—His Share, during the Remainder of his Reign, in the Wars of France and Spain in northern Italy—Disastrous Consequences of his overweening Ambition—His Death—Victor Amadeus I.—Tyrannical Ascendancy of the French in Piedmont throughout his short Reign—Calamitous Minority of his Son, Charles Emmanuel II.—Civil War in Savoy and Piedmont; aggravated by the Interference of France and Spain—Charles Emmanuel II. does not recover all his States, until the Peace of the Pyrenees—The Remainder of his Reign unimportant—Victor Amadeus II.—His early Indications of consummate political Talents—His Opposition to the Designs of Louis XIV. of France—He joins the League of Augsburg—War in Piedmont, sustained by Victor Amadeus and his Allies against the French—Fortitude and Activity of the Duke—He concludes a separate Peace; and compels a general Recognition of the Neutrality of Italy—His Power prodigiously augmented—Genoa—Differences of the Republic with the House of Savoy—Exclusive Character of the Genoese sovereign Oligarchy—Mutual Hatred between that Body and the unprivileged Orders—Conspiracy of Giulio Cesare Vachero—Its Detection and Punishment—Difference between the Republic and France, provoked by the Arrogance of Louis XIV.—Cruel Bombardment of Genoa by the French—The Senate compelled, by this barbarous Outrage, to make Submission to the Tyrant—Venice—Partial Recovery of her ancient Activity and Vigour during this Century—Quarrel between the Republic and Pope Paul V.—The Senate always distinguished for their Resistance to ecclesiastical Encroach-

PAGE

ments—Universal religious Toleration, a Maxim of their Policy—Intolerable Pretensions of Paul V., steadily opposed by the Venetian Government—Papal Sentence of Excommunication and Interdict passed against the Republic—Firm Resistance of the Senate to its Operations—Desire of the Pope to have Recourse to temporal Arms—He is compelled to renounce his Pretensions to procure an Accommodation—Signal Triumph of the Republic—Its good Effects for Catholic Europe—Energy of the Venetian Senate in maintaining their Sovereignty over the Adriatic—The Uscochi—Origin of those Pirates of Dalmatia—Their incessant and bold Depredations in the Gulf—The Austrian Government protect them—Serious Resolution at length formed by Venice to chastise them—Consequent War with the House of Austria—Alliance of the Republic with Savoy and the Seven United Provinces—Conclusion of the War—The Objects of Venice attained by the Dispersion of the Uscochi, and the Assertion of her Dominion over the Adriatic—Exasperation of Spain against the Republic—Story of the famous Conspiracy, attributed to the Spanish Ambassador, for the Destruction of Venice—Share of Venice in the other Italian Wars of this Century against the House of Austria; terminated by the Peace of Chierasco—Remarkable Recognition of her Dominion over the Adriatic—Little Connection between the Affairs of Venice and of the other Italian States, during the Remainder of the Century—Unprovoked Attack of the Turks upon the Republic—Long and disastrous War of Candia; marked by many glorious naval Achievements of the Venetian Arms—Heroic and sanguinary Defence of Candia—Peace obtained by the Republic by the Cession of that Island—New War of Venice, in Concert with the Empire, against the Infidels—Victorious and brilliant Career of the republican Arms—Conquest of the Morea—The Republic exhausted by her Efforts—Peace of Carlowitz—The Morea retained by Venice 486

CHAPTER XI.

STATE OF ITALY DURING THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY; UNTIL THE COMMENCEMENT OF THE WARS OF THE FRENCH REVOLUTION. A.D. 1700—1789.

PART I.

Death of Charles II. of Spain—Extinction of the Spanish Branch of the House of Austria—Long Influence of that Event on the State of Italy—The Disposal of the Italian Provinces, regulated at the absolute Will of foreign Cabinets—Abject Condition and confirmed Degradation of the People—General Sketch of the shifting Aspect of the Peninsula, until the Peace of Aix-la-Chapelle—War of the Spanish Succession—The Authority of Philip V. recognized in the Spanish Provinces of Italy—The Bourbon Cause at first supported by Victor Amadeus II. of Savoy—His Defection entails the Ruin of the Bourbon Interests in the Peninsula—Battle of Turin—Evacuation of all Italy by the French—Neutrality of most of the Italian Powers in this War—Ferdinand Charles, Duke of Mantua, ruined by the Reverses of his French Allies—Extinction of the House of Gonzaga—Peace of Utrecht—Montferrat acquired by Victor Amadeus; and Sicily also, with the regal Title—Naples, Sardinia, Milan, &c. assigned to the Empire—Short Period of Repose for Italy, interrupted by the Ambition of Cardinal Alberoni and of the Spanish Court—War of the Quadruple Alliance—Issue of the Contest—The Kingdom of Sardinia (in Exchange for Sicily) permanently assigned to the House of Savoy—The Crowns of the Two Sicilies reunited under the Empire—Peace of Italy for thirteen Years—Extinction of the ducal House of Farnése at Parma—Their Duchy inherited by Don Carlos of Spain—Italy made the Theatre of the War of the Polish Elec-

PAGE

tion—Conquest of the Sicilies by the Spaniards—The Crowns of those Kingdoms received by the Infant Don Carlos—Peace of Vienna—Death of the Emperor Charles VI.—The furious War of the Austrian Succession fills Italy with Rapine and Havoc—Active Share taken in this War by Charles Emmanuel III., King of Sardinia—His skilful and artful Policy—Sanguinary Campaigns in northern Italy—Peace of Aix-la-Chapelle—The Independence of Italy, an Object of that Treaty—Its abortive Results upon a People without Patriotism or Virtue—Total Insignificance of Italian History during the long Peace between the Treaty of Aix-la-Chapelle and the French Revolution—Domestic Fortunes, &c. of the different Italian States in the eighteenth Century—Little separate Notice required for those of Lucca—Milan and Mantua—Parma and Placentia—NAPLES AND SICILY—Reign of the Infant Don Carlos, over those Kingdoms—His laudable efforts to promote their Welfare—His Errors—Succession of Don Carlos to the Spanish Crown (Charles III.)—Reign of Ferdinand IV. over the Sicilies—His Minority—His neglected Education—His Marriage—Authority engrossed by the young Queen—Rise of her Favorite Acton—His unlimited Influence 539

PART II.

THE POPEDOM—State of the papal Power and Dominions in the eighteenth Century—Universal Revolt of Europe against the papal Authority—Succession of Pontiffs—Benedict XIV. (Lambertini)—His enlightened and amiable Spirit—Clement XIV. (Ganganelli)—His Virtues and Accomplishments—Suppression of the Jesuits—Pius VI.—Unimportant Commencement of his calamitous Pontificate—STATES OF THE HOUSE OF SAVOY—Their continual Aggrandizement—Victor Amadeus II.—His admirable domestic Administration—His Abdication.—His vain Attempt to resume his Crown—Revolting Ingratitude of his Son—His Death—Reign of Charles Emmanuel III.—

PAGE

Wisdom of his Government—Victor Amadeus III.—Tuscany—Sombre Reign of the Grand-duke Cosmo III. de' Medici—His vain Efforts to perpetuate the Existence of his House—His Death—Giovan Gastone, the last Duke of his Line—Reckless Dissipation of his Reign—His Death—Extinction of the sovereign Line of Medici—The Grand-duchy under the House of Lorraine—Government of the Emperor Francis I.—Beneficent Reign of Peter Leopold of Lorraine—His numerous Reforms—Prosperity of the Grand-duchy—He quits it to assume the imperial Crown—Ingratitude of the Tuscans—Total Cessation of the Work of Improvement—Modena—Continued Decline of the House of Este—Long and calamitous Reigns of the Dukes Rinaldo, Francesco III., and Ercole III.—Approaching Extinction of their Line—Genoa—Share of the Republic in the War of the Austrian Succession—The City basely surrendered to the Austrians by the Senate—Intolerable Insolence and Exactions of the Conquerors—General Insurrection of the lower People against their foreign Tyrants—The Austrians driven with Loss and Disgrace from the City—Heroic Constancy of the People—The Oligarchy suffered to revive—Affairs of Corsica—The People of that Island driven to revolt by the Tyranny of Genoa—Long Struggle of Genoa to recover her Dominion—Adventures of Theodore de Neuhoff, the ephemeral King of Corsica—The Senate of Genoa obtain the Aid of France—A Republic established in Corsica—Government of Paschal Paoli—The Sovereignty of Corsica ceded to Louis XV. by the Genoese Senate—Conquest of the Island by the French—Venice—Weakness and final Decay of the Republic—Forced Neutrality of the State in the Wars of Europe—Re-conquest of the Morea by the Turks—Peace of Passarowitz—Venice falls into utter Oblivion—Relaxation of Vigour in the Venetian Despotism—Frightful Licentiousness of private Manners in Venice—Conclusion 574

THE

HISTORY OF ITALY.

CHAPTER I.

FROM THE FALL OF THE WESTERN EMPIRE, TO THE CORONATION OF THE EMPEROR OTHO THE GREAT.—A.D. 476—961.

PART I.

*Fall of the Western Empire—Reign of Odoacer, King of Italy—Conquest of Italy by the Ostrogoths—Reign of Theodoric the Great—Fall of the Ostrogoth Power—Conquest of Italy by Belisarius and Narses—Government of Narses—Invasion of Italy by the Lombards—*KINGDOM OF THE LOMBARDS*—State of Italy after its Foundation—Duration and Extinction of the Lombard Dynasty—Conquest of Lombardy by Charlemagne—His Coronation as Emperor of the West—Laws of the Lombards—Feudal System—Alodial Tenures—Benefices—Fiefs or Feuds—Sub-infeudation—State of the Feudal Aristocracy—Reign of Charlemagne in Italy—His Power and Character—Successors of Charlemagne—Carlovingian Dynasty in Italy—Its Extinction—Feudal Anarchy in Italy—Berenger I. King of Italy and Emperor—his Death—Incursions of the Saracens and Hungarians—Effects of their Inroads in promoting the Freedom of the Italian Cities—Hugo King of Italy—his Depo-*

sition—his Son Lothaire, King—his Death—Berenger II. King of Italy—Otho the Great, King of Italy—Berenger his Vassal, deposed—Otho Emperor.

CHAP. I. PART I.

THE line which separates the ancient and the modern history of the world can be no other than an imaginary boundary. There is no natural chasm in the train of events, no cessation or interruption in the tide of fate, at which a new æra can be counted distinct from, and unconnected with, the moment that has immediately preceded it. Wherever we assume our station, we must still refer to the past, if we would render the future intelligible. Yet the adoption of some recognized, though artificial, limit is indispensable; and historians have agreed in dating the commencement of modern history from the Fall of the Western Empire of the Romans. The epoch thus created by common consent is sufficiently convenient for the general annals of Europe; but it is, on many accounts, peculiarly appropriate in its application to the vicissitudes of Italian history. The rise of the feudal system in that country, the establishment of the greatest of her republics, the origin of ecclesiastical power; almost every circumstance which, in succeeding centuries, affected the moral and political condition of the Italians, was either faintly shadowed out or more distinctly visible in the subversion of the western empire.

Fall of the Western Empire.

Of the gigantic frabric of Roman power there had long remained to the western emperors but the name, and the precarious possession of Italy,

at the mercy of barbarian invaders or mercenaries. But it was not until the end of the fifth century that the final blow was given to the magnificent structure which, however rudely assailed, had gradually fallen rather under the pressure of its own stupendous weight than by the shock of external violence. Odoacer, a leader of the bands of foreign mercenaries in the imperial pay, who formed at once the terror and the defence of Italy, was destined to complete the ruin of ages. His fellow-soldiers were barbarians of various nations: they envied the fortune of their brethren in Gaul, Spain, and Africa, whose victorious arms had acquired an independent and perpetual inheritance; and they insolently required that a third part of the lands of Italy should be immediately divided among them. The audacious demand was resisted by the patrician Orestes, who, having raised his son Augustulus to the imperial purple, governed under his nominal sovereignty: and Odoacer, himself a barbarian of Scythian descent, knew how to found his greatness upon the discontent which the refusal excited. He promised the troops, if they would associate under his orders, to obtain for them by force the lands which had been denied to their petition. He was elected by acclamation to the supreme command; and he speedily accomplished the overthrow of the feeble emperor and his more spirited parent. The patrician Orestes, after an ineffectual struggle, was taken and executed at Pavia; but Augustulus was permitted to preserve an

CHAP. I. PART I. 476

inglorious existence by the resignation of his diadem. The name of the Empire of the West was suppressed by the modesty or prudence of the conqueror. Odoacer reigned only as the king of Italy; and the sovereignty of Rome was transferred, for the first time, to the nations of the north.

The subjection of Italy to an insolent soldiery, and the partition of the third of all its territory among the brutal conquerors, seemed to plunge the degenerate descendants of the Roman name into the lowest abyss of shame and misery; yet it is from this epoch that we may trace the slow revival of those energies which the long and gloomy tyranny of the Cæsars had extinguished in the Italian people. It is impossible to conceive a more melancholy picture of national debasement and universal moral depravity, than is afforded by the last days of the empire. The Roman nobles, utterly sunken in slothful and voluptuous indulgence, were capable of no one manly or generous feeling. Animated neither by the desire of intellectual superiority, nor by the thirst of personal glory, they forsook the civil and military employments of the state, and have left to history no other record of their names, than by the spoliation of their enormous and fatal wealth. The very existence of the rest of the nation, if possible yet more degraded and base, is concealed from our researches in worthless obscurity. The armies were composed only of barbarians, the country was cultivated only by

slaves, and we ask in vain for a vestige of the free population. The mixture of the barbarian soldiery of Odoacer with the people whose possessions they had forcibly shared, infused the first principle of re-action and returning life into a diseased and corrupted body. The settlement of the conquerors in the provinces of Italy must be regarded only as the establishment, in a firmer posture, of the foreign mercenaries, who had long formed the sole force of the state. The success of Odoacer was gained by no new swarm of barbarians; and the progress of desolation and wretchedness, in a country which had groaned under every extremity of war, pestilence, and famine, was arrested by his prudence, or mitigated by his humanity. His reign was not long; but he only fell to make way for other conquerors: and the native population, far from being exterminated, was again refreshed and invigorated by new accessions of foreign strength. At different intervals we shall find the Goths, the Lombards, and the Franks, successively acquiring the dominion of Italy, and each incorporating themselves with their subjects, until the Italian character, thus quickening with the spirit of personal independence, the glorious distinction of these northern people, rose from the lowest depths of humiliation and cowardice to an elevation and dignity of soul which at once fitted it for the enjoyment, and ensured the possession, of freedom.*

Reign of Odoacer, king of Italy, 476—493.

* Sismondi, Histoire des Républiques Italiennes du Moyen Age. vol. i. c. 1. pp. 2—9. Gibbon, c. 35 and 36. from whom,

CHAP. I. PART I.

The reign of Odoacer had endured but fourteen years when he was summoned to defend his throne against Theodoric, king of the Ostrogoths, who prepared, at the suggestion or with the connivance of Zeno, emperor of the east, to lead the whole force of his people from the provinces of the eastern empire to the conquest of Italy. Theodoric, who united in his person all the heroic qualities of uncivilized life, with many of the milder virtues, had succeeded, by the death of his uncles and father, to the hereditary sovereignty of his nation. His youth had been passed at Constantinople, whither he had been sent as a pledge of the alliance which the imbecile Zeno purchased of the barbarians. He had been educated at that capital with care and tenderness, he excelled in warlike exercises, and, if it be doubtful whether he cultivated or neglected the science and arts of Greece,* his mind was at least stored with the fruits of observation and intelligence. He had already proved to his subjects, by his exploits, that he had not degenerated from the valour of his ancestors; the whole nation were ready to attend his standard, and the emperor

the original authors in Muratori's collection, Scriptores Rerum Italicarum, and the Chronicles of the Byzantine writers, M. Sismondi has, I observe, drawn his information.

* Sismondi, in a brief and passing mention of Theodoric, declares him to have been acquainted with "the sciences of civilized nations," on the authority of Jornandes, (De Rebus Geticis, in the first volume of the Scriptores Rerum Ital. c. 52. p. 217.) Gibbon, on the contrary, believes him to have been illiterate, principally from the testimony of the Valesian Fragment, published at the end of Ammianus Marcellinus.

Zeno gladly seized the opportunity of ridding himself of a dangerous ally, by proposing, or consenting, that Theodoric should lead his restless and turbulent followers into Italy. Zeno had maintained a friendly correspondence with Odoacer after the fall of the western empire, but Theodoric nevertheless entered Italy to reign as 489
the ally or lieutenant of the emperor. His march must be considered as the emigration of an entire people, for the families and most precious effects of the Goths were carefully transported with them. Odoacer defended with unshaken courage the crown which his sword had won. He suffered Conquest of Italy by the Ostrogoths.
repeated defeats, and lost all Italy, except Ravenna, where he maintained himself; and for three years the contest remained undecided. It was at length terminated by a treaty, which gave equal and undivided authority over Italy to the two leaders, and admitted Theodoric into Ravenna. But, in 493
the midst of the consequent rejoicings, Odoacer was treacherously stabbed, by the hand, or at the command, of his rival, his soldiers were every where massacred, and Theodoric reigned, without opposition, from the Alps to the extremity of Calabria.

Notwithstanding the foul act of perfidy which Reign of Theodoric the Great, 493—525.
sullied its commencement, the long reign of Theodoric was an æra of tranquil felicity for the inhabitants of Italy. Under his vigorous but impartial administration, they found a repose and prosperity to which their wearied country had long been a stranger. The civil offices of the

CHAP. I. PART I.

state were confided to Italians alone; the people enjoyed their dress and language, their laws and customs, their personal freedom, two-thirds of their landed property, and protection from the violence of their barbarian conquerors. Theodoric, with singular moderation, in the pride of victory and flower of his age, renounced the prosecution of farther conquests to devote himself to the duties of civil government. The hostilities in which he was sometimes engaged were speedily terminated by his arms, and his kingdom was preserved from insult by the terror of his name. Agriculture revived under the shadow of peace, navigation was pursued in security, and commerce increased and multiplied beneath his fostering encouragement. It was the policy of Theodoric to maintain the distinction between his Italian and Gothic subjects, by restricting the former to civil, and the latter to military, employments. The Goths held their lands as military stipends, which bound them in constant readiness for the public defence; they were spread over the kingdom, in possession of one-third of its soil, and the whole extent of Italy was distributed into the several quarters of a well-regulated camp. In a new and happy climate their numbers multiplied with formidable rapidity, and they could muster two hundred thousand warriors, besides their women and children. While their monarch strove to perpetuate their separation from the Italians, it was his constant endeavour to moderate their barbarian violence, to teach them the

duties of civil society, and to confirm them in habits of temperance, obedience, and order. For three-and-thirty years Theodoric watched with laborious anxiety over the common happiness of both classes of his subjects. Few sovereigns have in an equal degree merited to be numbered among the benefactors of mankind; yet it is painful to add that the evening of his life was clouded by popular discontent, soured by ingratitude, and defiled with virtuous blood. The hatred of the Italians was excited by the imposition of taxes which were necessary for the exigencies of the state; and the mind of the king, stung to indignation by their ill-founded murmurs, was filled with suspicions of treason. The murder of his rival, Odoacer, was a stain upon the fair fame of his manhood; and the execution of his minister, the learned and pious Boethius,—the last of the Romans, says a great author, whom Cato or Tully could have acknowledged for their countryman,—and of the innocent and venerable patrician, Symmachus, branded the old age of the monarch with indelible infamy, and embittered his last hours with unavailing remorse. *

525

Fall of the power of the Ostrogoths.

Athalaric, 525—534

After the death of Theodoric, the dominion of the Ostrogoths lasted only twenty-seven years. It was for Italy a period of internal dissensions and foreign invasions, of fearful agitations and bloodshed and horror. Of six princes, whose brief reigns were crowded into this narrow space,

* Gibbon, c. 39. a beautiful narrative of the life and actions of Theodoric.

CHAP. I. PART I.

Theodatus, 534—536
Vitiges, 536—540
Hildebald, 540—541
Totila, 541—552
Teias, 552—553

no one vacated the throne after the gradual decay of nature's powers; the first perished prematurely by intemperance, the career of royalty of the others was terminated by deposition or violent death. But it is not within my purpose to trace with minuteness every vicissitude in the fortunes of an obscure age and a barbarous people; it will be sufficient to relate the general circumstances which produced the extinction of the Gothic dominion. A change of national character was not the least powerful cause. Notwithstanding the precautions of Theodoric, it was impossible to prevent his followers from losing, in the peaceful bosom of civilized society, some portion of the rude hardihood and valour of barbarian life. Even his successful efforts to humanize their manners and correct their excesses, could not fail to mitigate the violence of their warlike spirit. They had already, during his reign, adopted the fashion of Italian dress, and a period of sixty years must have rapidly effaced the proud distinction between the conquerors, and the people among whom they had every where settled. If mixture with the freemen of the north was calculated to revive the energies of the feeble natives of Italy, Italian example was certain to exercise an equal though opposite and fatal influence upon the simple virtues of the barbarian. The distractions of the Gothic kingdom were insidiously fomented by the arts of Justinian, then emperor of the east; the advantage which Grecian treachery extracted from the disorders of Italy,

was seconded by the courage and military skill of Belisarius, and afterwards of the eunuch Narses; and the good fortune of Justinian, in possessing such generals, the first of whom he rewarded with the basest ingratitude, gave the temporary possession of Italy to his arms, and shed lustre over the expiring vigour of his empire. Yet under all the evils of intestine disputes, the Gothic kingdom, with a force of two hundred thousand combatants, could not have been twice subjugated by inferior numbers, whose imperfect courage was with difficulty sustained by the talents of their leaders, if the Goths had not already lost the better part of their original spirit. But they still fought with a resolution that merited a happier fate. The details of the conquest of Italy, first by Belisarius, and again, after a general revolt of the Goths, by Narses, belong rather to the eastern empire than to my subject. The contest was long chequered by alternate fortune; but when the two last Gothic sovereigns, Totila and Teias, had successively fallen, as became them, in the field of battle, the total subversion of their monarchy was finally accomplished. *

Conquest of Italy by Belisarius and Narses.

The eunuch Narses, under the title of exarch, administered the government of Italy with wisdom and vigour for about fifteen years. But his virtues were sullied by avarice; his rule became

Government of Narses. 553—567

* Gibbon, parts of cc. 41. 43. Muratori, Annali d'Italia, A.D. 526—553. The Italian has placed the death of Theodoric a year later than our historian.

CHAP. I. PART I.

unpopular; complaints of his oppression reached the imperial throne, and he was deprived of his command. The mandate of recall to Constantinople was couched in expressions of insult; and Narses, if the popular belief of his age may be credited, stooping to an unworthy revenge for the ingratitude of the court and the Italians, invited the Lombards, a barbarian nation who had settled in Pannonia, to undertake the invasion and conquest of Italy. This people, whose successful enterprise was to perpetuate their name * in the fertile plains of northern Italy, were distinguished even among the German tribes for their freedom, their valour, and their ferocity. Their warlike sovereign, Alboin, descended from the Alps with the entire nation, and the whole country, from those mountains to the gates of Ravenna and Rome, rapidly passed under his dominion. The helpless successor of Narses could offer no opposition in the field; the pusillanimous Italians were not ashamed to believe, without a trial, that the barbarians were invincible, and the city of Pavia was the only place which attempted serious resistance to the invaders. The siege lasted above three years, and, when famine opened the gates, Alboin spared the inhabitants, and established among them the capital of the new king-

Invasion of Italy by the Lombards. 568

* Their name of *Langobards* was expressive of the length and fashion of their beards. If their historian, Paul Warnefrid, the deacon, may be relied on, the Lombards had their origin in the dark forests of Scandinavia. (De Gestis Langob. lib. i. c. 2.)

dom of LOMBARDY. His reign was glorious, but he did not live to complete the subjugation of Italy. An independent people had already formed an impregnable fastness in the lagunes of Venice; Rome, under its bishops, who had even then conceived in part their schemes of ambition, continued faithful to the eastern emperors, less from attachment to them than from terror and hatred of the Lombards; and the province of Ravenna, the Pentapolis of Romagna, and the maritime cities of southern Italy, remained in the hands of the Greeks, and under the supremacy of the imperial exarchs. The kingdom of the Lombards therefore embraced only the northern divisions of Italy; but a prince of their nation, subject no more than in name to the monarchy, penetrated with his followers into the centre of those provinces which now form the Neapolitan dominions, and there established the Lombard duchy of Benevento.

State of Italy after its foundation.

The power of the Lombards lasted with considerable splendour for two hundred and six years. Like other rude states their monarchy was in principle elective; their freedom was often barbarian licence; and crime and disorder throw an occasional stain over the pages of their history: but the succession of their sovereigns was marked with ability and virtue, and the troubled series of their annals was adorned with fair intervals of peace, order, and internal happiness. The effects of prosperity and wealth, and the influence of Italian climate and example, rapidly

Duration and extinction of the Lombard dynasty.

CHAP. I. PART I. KINGDOM OF THE LOMBARDS.

civilized their manners, humanized their characters, and weakened their hardihood. The founder of their monarchy, Alboin, was gifted with all the qualities, good and evil, which form the character of a barbarian and a conqueror. He was mur-

573 dered, after a reign of only four years, at the instigation of his queen, Rosamond. Her father had fallen in battle against the Lombards before her forced union with their king; and her brutal lord, during the intoxication of a feast in his palace near Verona, obliged her to drink from a goblet which had been formed of the skull of her parent. She vowed to wipe out the insult in his blood; and the indulgence of an adulterous passion was superadded to the desire of vengeance. The premature death of Alboin arrested the progress of the Lombard arms. Clepho, a noble chieftain, was elected to the kingly office; and a second tragedy closed his mortal career in less

574 than two years. The royal dignity was suspended in anarchy during the minority of his son, Autharis; but his valour and talents restored it with

584 manhood in his person. He successfully defended his kingdom from the arms of the Merovingian sovereigns of France, and confirmed and extended

591 the power of his nation. From the death of Autharis to the overthrow of the Lombard greatness by Charlemagne, nineteen princes successively reigned in the capital of Pavia; but their history will no farther interest the reader than as it is connected with the fortunes of Italy. The provinces which had remained to the Greeks from

Agilulf, 591
Adaloald, 615
Arioald, 625
Rotharis, 636

the original conquest of Alboin, still resisted the efforts of his successors; and, for nearly two centuries, the exarchs of Ravenna shared the dominion of Italy with the monarchs of Lombardy. Under the shadow of a mighty name, the Greek empire had long concealed the extent of its decline. But the charm was at last broken; and the conquest of Ravenna, by the Lombard king Astolpho, (A.D. 752.) put a final period to the power and the office of the exarchs. All Italy now appeared prostrate at the feet of Astolpho, and the fall of Rome might have completed the glory of his reign. But though the Greek power had sunken for ever, the Lombard kingdom, left without a competitor, had lost its own energy in awaiting the occasion for its display. When the pope in person implored the protection of Pepin, who succeeding to the power of his father, Charles Martel, had erected his throne on the ruin of the Merovingian dynasty of France, the degenerate Lombards were no longer equal to a struggle with the courageous Franks. A French army 755
crossed the Alps under their gallant monarch, to deliver the church from the oppression of Astolpho; and the Lombard, after a weak resistance, was compelled to restore the territory of Romagna, and to yield the exarchate of Ravenna to the Holy See. After this disgraceful reverse, the monarchy of the Lombards survived about twenty years in languor and decay, until it fell before the irresistible power of Charlemagne. To that mighty conqueror, Desiderio, the last of the Lom-

Rodoald, 652
Aribert I. 653
Godebert, 661
Grimoald, 662
Pertarito, 671
Cunibert, 678
Lieutbert, 700
Ragunbert and Aribert II. 701
Aliprand and Liutprand, 712
Ildeprand, 736
Rachis, 744
Astolpho, 749
Desiderio, 757

Conquest of Lombardy by Charlemagne. 774

CHAP. L PART I. 800

bard princes, resigned his sceptre and his capital. The friendship of the victor and the Papal See, was cemented over the ruin of the Lombard dynasty, and in the church of St. Peter at Rome, Charlemagne received from the hands of pope Leo III. the crown, the symbol of the restoration of the empire of the West. *

His coronation as Emperor of the West.

Laws of the Lombards.

The monarchy of the Lombards was, as has been already mentioned, elective. The great assembly of the nation was held in the palace or on the open plains of Pavia; and was composed of the *dukes*, or military governors of provinces, the great officers of state, the public functionaries, and, in fine, of all the freemen of the kingdom. At these assemblies the laws of the Lombards were established by the mutual consent of the sovereign and the people; and they have been esteemed the least imperfect of the barbaric codes. Seventy-six years after the Lombards came into Italy, their laws were solemnly ratified, some new provisions suitable to the silent changes of time were introduced, and the whole were promulgated by king Rotharis as the general act of the nation. † Such crimes as threatened the life of the sovereign, or the safety of the state, were adjudged worthy of death; but the principle of pecuniary compensation extended through the rest of the code; and the price of blood, and of

* Gibbon, c. 45. and part of c. 49. Sismondi, vol. i. pp. 12—19. Muratori, Ann. 567—600.

† This code is preserved in Teutonic Latin, in the first volume of Muratori's Scriptores Ital.

of an opprobrious word, was measured with the same scrupulous diligence. We must not look in these constitutions, or in any code of the barbarian nations, for express acknowledgments of the rights of the people, the prerogatives of the aristocracy, or the limitations imposed upon the royal authority. All these existed independently of the laws; but the circumstance which characterized a free people, was the regulation of punishments for each offence, with a precision which might appear ridiculous in our eyes, if we could forget that, in a rude and turbulent age, it formed the security of individuals against all arbitrary inflictions.

The circumstances which attended the establishment of the Lombard monarchy, render the epoch of its power one of the most important and interesting events in Italian history; and it will be difficult to comprehend the peculiarities that marked the condition of Italy for several succeeding ages, without pausing in this place to take a rapid survey of the changes which originated in the conquests of Alboin. The continual hostilities which were exercised between the barbarian chieftains, and the cities and provinces acknowledging the Greek dominion, infused reviving energy and independence into the Italian subjects of the eastern empire; and the weakness of a government which could afford them but feeble protection from the invaders, while it entailed on the native population the necessity of exertion to save them from the hated yoke of the Lombard,

CHAP. I. PART I.

taught them to aspire to that freedom which could only be preserved by their own swords. Even before the fall of the exarchate, the allegiance of its scattered dependencies had evaporated into a name; and after the viceroys of the eastern empire had ceased to rule in Ravenna, the maritime cities of the south asserted and enjoyed the full measure of republican independence. At the close of this chapter it will be our business to revert briefly to the history of these cities; and to trace the rising fortunes of Venice. The aspect of other parts of Italy under the Lombard monarchy, merits more immediate attention. It exhibits the origin and growth of the feudal system.

Feudal system.

When the army of freemen, who followed the standard of the Lombard conqueror, had achieved the subjugation of northern Italy, the lands of the new kingdom were parcelled out among the victors; who, leaving the natives to cultivate them in a state of servitude, seized a third of the produce. Every soldier thus received a share of land, and though the division was undoubtedly unequal, the scale on which the distribution was regulated has entirely escaped every effort of modern research. There is no reason to believe in the existence of any privileges of hereditary nobility among the Lombards before the æra of their Italian invasion, and it can only be conjectured that the principal leaders of their army acquired a proportion of the spoil commensurate with the rank or estimation to which their military virtues had raised them among their fellow

soldiers. The lands so partitioned out, in whatever proportions, were all termed *alodial;* * they were subjected to no burthen, except that of the public defence, and passed to all the children equally, or, on their failure, to the nearest kindred. But besides the lands distributed among the nation, others were reserved to the crown for the support of its dignity and the exercise of its munificence; and, of these, the larger portion soon came to be granted out to favoured subjects and to provincial governors, under the title of *benefices* (beneficia). These gifts, which were originally † for life, but gradually became hereditary, were saddled with the obligation of military service to the sovereign, who on his part was bound to his vassal by the corresponding duties of protection. When the Lombards had established themselves in their new possessions, they gave to their generals the government of cities and the provinces surrounding them, with the title of *dukes* ‡ (duces); the alodial proprietors were in

Alodial tenures.

Benefices, fiefs, or feuds.

* A compound of the German particle *an* and *lot;* i. e. land obtained by lot. Robertson's Charles V. vol. i. p. 270. Robertson is right. Johnson had some confused notion of the correct etymology, and in his lazy manner he says, that the word is most probably of German original. Hickes, Brady, and other Saxon gentlemen, have blundered about this simple word with more than their usual infelicity.

† It has been maintained by Robertson and other writers, that benefices were originally revocable at pleasure, but the assertion is clearly disproved by Mr. Hallam. Middle Ages, vol. i. p. 161.

‡ The kingdom of Lombardy was divided in the outset into thirty of these great governments or duchies.

CHAP. I. PART I.

readiness to serve under them for the public defence; and the whole conquering population preserved the form and the subordination of a military body. It was upon these great officers, the dukes, the marquisses, or margraves—entrusted with the protection of the marches or frontiers—and (afterwards) the counts or governors of towns, that the royal bounty was for the most part bestowed in the shape of benefices; and when, through the weakness of the crown, these gifts were converted by violence or usage into hereditary possessions, the titles of the offices to which they had been originally attached descended with them. In this manner was formed the great hereditary aristocracy of royal feudatories, who held their lands as immediate vassals* of the crown, and were bound to their sovereign by the mutual obligation of service and protection.

Sub-infeudation.

It was a natural consequence of hereditary benefices, which were afterwards more generally known by the term of *feuds*,† that the great proprietors should carve out portions of their demesnes, to be held of themselves, by a similar tenure; and this custom of *sub-infeudation* became in the ninth and tenth centuries universal. It created a subordinate class of nobility, styled *vavassores*, a word expressing their double allegiance, both to their own lord, and the superior

* From *Gwas*, a Celtic word for a servant. Hallam, vol. i. p. 155.

† Muratori, (Antiq. Med. Œv. vol. i. p. 594.) remarks that the word *Feudum* is not found in any document older than the eleventh century; but see Spelman's Glossary, Art. Feodum.

of whom he held; and completed the chain of feudal aristocracy. The oath of fidelity which the great feudatory had taken, the homage which he paid, and the military service which he owed to his sovereign, were all exacted by himself from his vassals. These latter, from the castles which they everywhere built on their fiefs, were known by the appellation of *châtelains* as well as vavassores: they enjoyed the military services of inferior feudal tenants, and the labour of the villeins and serfs on their estates, who formed the mass of the peasant population, and were held in abject dependance and slavery.

While the royal donation of benefices was planting the foundations, and the custom of sub-infeuding was extending the ramifications of the feudal system, the condition of the alodial proprietors, who had formed the original strength of all the barbarian kingdoms, was fast assimilating to the same dependance upon a superior lord which distinguished later tenures. Alodial seems so much more desirable than feudal property, that it would appear, at first sight, extraordinary that the transition from the one sort of tenure to the other should have been, as it generally was, the voluntary act of the possessor. But amidst the rapine and violence, the private wars and public disorders, which marked the times, the insulated alodialist found no protection or safety. Without law to redress his injuries, without power in the crown to support his rights, he was ever exposed to the tyranny of the rapacious governors and

CHAP. I. PART I.

overbearing lords of his district; and he had no course left but to compromise with oppression, and subject himself, in return for protection, to a feudal superior. In France the alodial lands almost all became feudal in little more than a century from the period before us; and, if the change was not so general, or cannot be so extensively traced, at least, in Italy, there can be no doubt of its prevalence. Where alodial estates were large, the possessors would naturally strengthen themselves by sub-infeuding them among their tenants, upon condition of military service; where they were small, they themselves needed the protection of the nearest châtelain; and, in both cases, the supremacy of the great feudatory of the province would be necessary to complete their security. But it may be suspected that the process was far from being, in all instances, voluntary. The alodialist was often, perhaps, compelled to recognize himself the vassal of a great lord, and thus to confess an original feudal tenure which had never existed.

State of the feudal aristocracy.

Under the feudal system generally, and particularly, in as far as it prevailed in Italy, territorial property thus belonged only, in reality, to the gentlemen, the lower class of nobility, or châtelains. They were surrounded by their military retainers, and by the serfs of the glebe, whom they had originally enslaved, and from whom they took a third of the produce of the land. The towns were abandoned by a class which comprised the most considerable citizens; and the country

bristled with their fortresses. Living on their demesnes, like petty sovereigns, they felt neither the wish of cultivating their minds to shine in society, nor the necessity of dazzling, by their splendour, inferiors who were already in abject submission. War and the chase were their only pleasures, and their luxury knew no other objects. The education of the gentleman taught him no more than to tame the fiery spirit of the war-horse, to manage with address the buckler and heavy lance, and to endure without fatigue the weight of the most ponderous cuirass. It was neither required of him to speak with elegance nor to write with correctness. The vulgar tongue had already begun to assume a character entirely distinct from the Latin, while the Latin still formed the only written language. All the contracts of gentlemen of this period, of which a great number have been preserved, are drawn up by notaries in the most barbarous latinity; and, at the foot of the act, the vender, the purchaser, and the witnesses, often all of them gentlemen, were able to make no other signature than a cross, which the notary declares to be the mark of the contracting parties. The nobility were as ignorant of the arts as of the sciences. They laboured to make their castles impregnable, but not to adorn their architecture, or render them agreeable abodes. Some of these substantial, but gloomy edifices, have withstood the attacks both of time and of enemies; and frown over the traveller, at this hour, from the summits of inaccessible rocks, or the entrance of narrow defiles.

CHAP. I. PART I.

While the whole country was in the hands of the rude lords of these dungeons, the authority of the dukes, their superiors, reposed only on a fiction of property,—on an imaginary right to demesnes and provinces of which these great feudatories possessed, in reality, no portion. But still, the same system formed the security of the duke and the vavassore; it equally sanctioned the obedience of the great vassal and his inferior; and, for several centuries, the dukes enjoyed the aggregate of power which the united force of their châtelains could produce. In ascending the feudal scale, the king should have possessed over the dukes the same authority which they exercised over their vavassores. But, if the right of property of the great feudatories over their provinces was but a fiction of the law, that of the sovereign over his kingdom was a still fainter shadow of reality: and, since the stability of power rested on a territorial basis, the authority of the vavassores among their inferiors was necessarily arbitrary, that of the dukes but precarious, and that of the kings almost a nullity.

Such was the feudal system, in its origin, among the Lombards. It was a mixture of barbarism and liberty, discipline and independence, singularly calculated to instil into each man the consciousness of personal dignity, the energy which developes public virtues, and the pride by which they are maintained. The slavery of the peasants was, doubtless, the odious part of this system: but it should not be forgotten, that it was established at an æra when even a more absolute and

debasing servitude formed part of the system and of the manners of all civilized states; that the Roman slave, who cultivated the soil, might consider the change a happy one which rendered him the serf of the glebe; and that vassalage was the degree by which the lower orders of the people were raised from the servitude of antiquity to modern enfranchisement. In the attempt that has been made to convey some idea of institutions which held a paramount influence over the state of Italian society from the eighth to the twelfth century, it has been sometimes necessary to anticipate the exact course of time, and always impossible, within so narrow a compass, to trace more than the general features of the subject. But no other place has appeared altogether so proper for introducing the preceding remarks; and an elaborate treatise, which should embrace all the peculiarities of the feudal system, would have been beyond the aim, and foreign to the purpose, of the present undertaking. It will be sufficient if what has been said shall have rendered the political state of the fiefs, into which Italy was divided for three centuries after the Carlovingian conquest, intelligible to the reader in his passage through the few next pages. *

* I am indebted principally to the notes of Hargrave and Butler, to the sixteenth edition of Coke upon Littleton, for the substance of these passing notices on the feudal system; though I have referred, for the peculiar connection of the subject with Italian history, to the works of Muratori and Sismondi. Muratori, in his dissertations on Italian antiquities,

CHAP. I. PART I.

Reign of Charlemagne in Italy. 774—814

The overthrow of the Lombard dynasty by Charlemagne and his Franks was regarded by the Italians as a new invasion of barbarians. Yet it does not appear that the conquests of the new emperor of the west disturbed, to any general extent, the settlement of territorial fiefs. The great feudatories and their vassals transferred their allegiance to his power, almost all Italy submitted to his authority, and the imposing title of emperor covered his pretensions with veneration and splendour. His vast dominions were held together solely by the force of his genius and the watchful activity of his government. He was master of France, part of Spain, Italy, Germany, and Hungary; and, during his life, all these discordant parts of his empire were firmly cemented and wisely consolidated by the mere bond of his personal talents. He is, certainly, one of the most extraordinary and greatest characters in

His power,

and character.

has thrown his customary exactness and industry into the topic; but the eloquent historian of the Italian Republics has scarcely equalled himself in this part of his work, if I may presume to observe a defect in so splendid a production; nor has he extracted the essence of Muratori's labours with his usual happiness. The reader will consult in vain his chapter on the Feudal System, for an account of the origin and growth of its tenures.

The youthful student, who would indulge his curiosity for further information than these pages can pretend to convey on the minor details and peculiarities of the feudal system, will have few inquiries to satisfy after the perusal of Mr. Hallam's learned and beautiful essay in the first volume of his "Middle Ages," which I have consulted with profit.

history. His private life was deformed by licentious amours; he was unsparing of blood, though not constitutionally cruel; and his successes in Germany were defiled by atrocious butcheries: yet his vices were relieved, though they were not palliated, by frugality and temperance; and his barbarous ferocity was strangely contrasted with elevated views of national and intellectual improvement. In a life of restless military activity he found leisure to reform the coinage and regulate the legal standard of money in his realms; he gathered about him the learned of all countries; founded schools and accumulated libraries; he encouraged commerce; and he meditated the union of the Roman and barbarian codes into one great system of jurisprudence. If he derived much of his renown from a contrast with the rude characters who preceded him, and the imbecility of his immediate successors; if it enhanced the brilliance and grandeur of his appearance that he stood alone, as it has been beautifully expressed, "like a beacon upon a waste, or a rock in the broad ocean;" his great qualities still blaze with unfading light, and his memory still towers in magnificence above all ordinary fame.

Successors of Charlemagne.—Carlovingian dynasty of Italy.

The successors of Charlemagne were unable to wield his mighty sceptre, and sank under the burthen of his colossal power. It was fortunate for humanity that the mediocrity of their talents, and the repeated divisions of their enormous patrimony, prevented the confirmation of an universal monarchy; which, in its perpetuity, would

CHAP. I. PART I.

have degraded Europe to an equality with China, and condemned it to a state between ignorance and civilization, without energy or power, without glory or virtue. Charlemagne himself divided his empire among his sons, and by a happy error commenced the preparation for its fall. During
781 his life he had associated his son Pepin with him in the sovereignty of Italy; but Pepin died before
812 his father, leaving a natural son, Bernard, who succeeded under the emperor to the kingdom of his parent. He enjoyed but a brief career in his
814 new dignity; for, on the decease of Charlemagne, he attempted an unsuccessful rebellion against the youngest and only surviving son and successor of the emperor, Louis the Pious, who was induced to put him to death, with a severity foreign to his gentle nature, and for which he afterwards violently reproached himself. Louis immediately re-united the kingdom of Italy to the other dominions of Charlemagne, and commenced a reign of error and misfortune. He partitioned his empire among his three sons, and experienced in return the most unnatural ingratitude. And though the fault of his character lay rather in a softness of disposition than in any defect of courage and intellect, he passed an inglorious and troubled life, in continual struggles with his undutiful children. But the history of the Carlovingian family belongs rather to all Europe than to Italy; and I may rejoice with a great authority that my subject releases me from the necessity of tracing their fortunes through those disgraceful

wars between father and sons, and between brother and brother, which engross the memoirs of their house. After the death of Charlemagne his descendants preserved for sixty-four years only the vast monarchy which he had founded; and in that period six Carlovingian sovereigns reigned in succession over Italy. After several shameful and miserable reigns, the last of these princes, Charles the Fat, in whose person the empire had nearly re-united, was deposed in a diet. The great imperial feudatories, the dukes, the bishops, and the counts or governors of cities, all seized the fragments of his broken authority, and a consummation was put to the period of greatest feudal anarchy which has been recorded in the annals of Europe. Italy, however, was less unhappy during this period than the other dominions of the Carlovingian dynasty. The kingdom was governed, for twenty-six years, by Louis II. a virtuous prince, who wanted neither ability nor courage; and it was during his reign that the example of French valour revived the love of arms, and re-established the reputation of the warriors of Lombardy; that the fields began again to teem with inhabitants, and cities to recover the population which preceding invasions and distresses had almost exterminated. *

Louis the Pious, 814
Lothaire, 820
Louis II. 849
Charles the Bald, 875
Carloman, 877
Charles the Fat, 879

Extinction of the Carlovingian dynasty, 888

For above sixty years after the deposition of Charles the Fat, Italy was convulsed to its centre by intestine wars, and horribly ravaged by the

Feudal anarchy in Italy.

* Muratori, A.D. 774—888. Sismondi, vol. i. pp. 18—25.

CHAP. I. PART I.

predatory incursions of foreign enemies. Native princes aspired to the feudal crown, and the lesser nobles were ever arrayed against each other in support of rival candidates, or in resistance to the reigning sovereign. Meanwhile, the piratical Saracens from the sea-coasts, and the merciless Hungarians from the north-eastern frontiers, spread themselves like a devouring pestilence over the land, and left frightful traces of their impetuous and unresisted course in the conflagration of the open country, and the massacre of its inhabitants. But the revolutions of the throne, and the sufferings of the people amidst these turbulent and disastrous scenes, brought the energies of the Italian character, for the first time, into play; determined the bent of the national spirit; and developed that desire of republican liberty which we shall, in the next chapter, observe predominant in the cities of Lombardy.

Under the Carlovingian family the number of the Lombard duchies, which had originally been thirty, had, by accident or violence, by family alliances or the law of the strongest, become much diminished; more than one of the great fiefs sometimes falling under the power of the same feudatory; and, on the contrary, a great fief being often divided among several counts, or lesser proprietors. Hence, at the deposition of Charles the Fat, there were but five or six great lords in condition to command the nation and dispute the crown. The great Lombard duchy of Benevento, which had stood almost distinct

from the kingdom, had been the most powerful of Italian fiefs; but it was now in decay, and its princes were not in a situation to aim at the throne. The dukes, or marquisses—for these titles were of equal dignity and indifferent application—of Friuli, Spoleto, Ivrea, Susa, and Tuscany, were the leading feudal potentates of the kingdom. The last of these, however, Adalbert, count of Lucca and marquis of Tuscany, abstained in prudence from dangerously aspiring to the diadem of Italy. Possessing the beautiful province of Tuscany, which nature has separated by a chain of mountains from the rest of Italy, as though she had designed it for an independent state, he and his successors continued to govern it for a century and a half with considerable happiness, and their court passed for the most brilliant and sumptuous among those of the great feudatories. The marquis of Ivrea was master of Piedmont, but both he and the lord of Susa might veil their pretensions before the splendour of the princes of Friuli and Spoleto; and the kingdom was agitated for years by the rivalry of these puissant chiefs. Berenger, marquis of Friuli, was the Lombard representative of the ancient ducal family of that province; and, moreover, by his mother, the grandson of the emperor Louis the Pious. Guido, duke of Spoleto, of Frankish origin, was also allied to the royal family of Charlemagne. Motives of personal hatred were added to ambition in the struggle between Berenger and Guido: both pleaded royal descent,

CHAP. I. PART I.

both solicited the crown from the states of Italy, and, by turns conquering and defeated, both purchased the favour of the electors, at each revolution, by new concessions. The crown was thus despoiled of all its prerogatives without acquiring steady partisans by the sacrifice; and, in these and subsequent civil wars, the feudatories always embraced the part of the vanquished, or of some new candidate for royalty, because the conqueror had presumed to challenge their obedience. Berenger was, however, altogether more successful than any of his rivals; for though Guido and his son both bore, in succession, the title of king of Italy, and even of emperor, he broke the power of their house; and though Louis, king of Provence, and Rodolph, king of Burgundy, were afterwards supported by the Italian nobles against him in competition for the throne, he kept his seat and resisted their pretensions. He reigned for thirty-six years as king of Italy, and for the last nine of his life with the dignity of emperor. Active and courageous, humane and honorable, he was a prince of considerable talents and virtue, and his life was at last sacrificed to the indulgence of a generous, but misplaced, confidence. The archbishop of Milan and several lords, all of whom he had loaded with benefits, entered into a plot against him, and engaged a noble Veronese, named Flambert, whose son the emperor had held at the baptismal font, to assassinate him. Berenger, having discovered the conspiracy, summoned Flambert into his presence, reminded him of the

Berenger I. king of Italy. 888

Emperor, 915

kindnesses which he had received at his hands, and of the vows of attachment which he had poured forth in return; pointed out the little fruit which he could hope to gather from his meditated guilt; and, presenting him with a golden cup, added, "Let this goblet be the pledge of my oblivion of your crime and of your repentance. Take it, and do not forget that your emperor is also the sponsor of your child." The same night, instead of shutting himself up in the security of his fortified palace, Berenger, to shew that he had discarded all suspicion, slept unattended in a summer-house in his gardens. But in the morning, as he was going to mass, Flambert accompanied by an armed retinue met him, and, approaching as if to embrace him, basely stabbed him with his poignard. History has failed to explain the motives of this revolting act of ingratitude and treachery, and has only related the retributive vengeance which instantaneously overtook it. Milo, count of Verona, rushed to the aid of the emperor, and though too late to defend him, sacrificed the traitor and his associates on the spot.

His death. 924.

It was principally during the reign of Berenger that the incursions of the Hungarians and Saracens added a frightful scourge to the horrors of civil discord. The latter of these people had conquered the island of Sicily from the Greeks about half a century before, and established themselves in the south of Italy, whence they carried their ravages into the heart of the kingdom; while

Incursions of the Saracens and Hungarians.

CHAP. I. PART I.

other bands of their musulman brethren, landing from the shores of Spain, fortified themselves on the northern coast, and devastated Piedmont. These destroyers, and the yet more sanguinary Hungarians, who first penetrated into Italy through the March of Treviso, in the year 900, carried on their warfare in the same manner. Their armies were composed exclusively of light horse, who scoured the country in small squadrons, without caring to secure a retreat, or to attempt permanent conquests. The rapidity of their flight gave them immeasurable advantages over the heavy cavalry of the feudal chieftains. These vassals of the crown were formidable only against their sovereign, and ever powerless before a foreign enemy. The sluggish infantry of the cities was equally unable to contend in the open plains with plunderers whose object was only to accumulate booty and avoid an encounter. Neither the sovereign nor his feudatories lost any portion of their dominions; they counted the same number as before of subject cities and castles, but all around them was devastation and misery.*

Effects of these inroads in promoting the freedom of the Italian cities.

But the course of human suffering is often attended by a healing power. The Hungarian and Saracen inroads had a powerful and beneficial influence upon the freedom of the Italian communities. Before these invasions the towns had been open and without fortifications; but, in the

* De Guignes, Hist. Gen. des Huns, &c. v. i. p. 2. Jornandes De Rebus Geticis, &c. c. 38.

general confusion and distress, the cities were left by the great feudatories to their own means of defence. They were reduced to the necessity of erecting walls for their protection from these freebooters, to train their burghers to the use of arms, to enrol them into a regular militia, and, finally, to commission their own magistrates to command them. The inferior orders of the people were forced into action, and taught at once to guard their homes and to understand their rights.

The generous qualities of a hero had been unavailing against licentious violence and perfidy: the Italians were now to be taught by an oppressor to feel the necessity of a free constitution. Two years after the death of Berenger, the nation fell under the yoke of a remorseless tyrant. Hugo, count or duke of Provence, was elected to the Italian throne; and, by alternate fraud and violence, by fomenting the jealousies of the nobles, and rendering them a prey to each other, and by oppressing them all in their turns, he removed every bar to his ambition, and established a cruel and despotic authority. He had despoiled all the great vassals of their fiefs, with the solitary exception of Berenger, marquis of Ivrea, grandson of the emperor of that name; and had resolved to make that young prince, although his relative, the last victim of his sanguinary oppression. An order was already issued to deprive Berenger and his consort of their eyes; and they with difficulty

Hugo, king of Italy. 926

CHAP. I. PART I.

escaped to the court of Otho, king of Germany. That sovereign, who has deservedly been surnamed the Great, afforded an asylum to the
940 fugitives; and, though he gave no other assistance to Berenger, suffered him to assemble the Italian malcontents in the German dominions, and to prepare his schemes of vengeance against
945 Hugo. After a lapse of five years, Berenger entered Italy with a few followers, and soon found himself at the head of a powerful army, against which Hugo was unable to contend. The marquis of Ivrea, therefore, assembled the states of the kingdom to obtain their suffrages, in favour of pretensions which he now put forth for the crown, and against those of Hugo; but the nobles, feeling the power to be once more in their hands, endeavoured to preserve the balance be-

His deposition.

tween the rivals, by deposing Hugo, electing his

His son, Lothaire, king of Italy.

son Lothaire to the throne, and confiding the
945 general administration of the kingdom to Berenger. It was not probable, however, that such a partition of authority could be maintained. The ambition of Berenger was far from being satisfied; he saw that Lothaire had not, like his father, incurred the hatred of the people; that his queen Adelaide was adored by the Italians; and that there was too much reason to fear that the confidence of the nation would be daily more fully bestowed upon the son of Hugo, and more openly

His death.

withdrawn from him. The young king died, and
950 Berenger is accused by a contemporary chronicler,

of having resorted to poison to remove the object of his suspicion and dread. He subsequently demanded for his son the hand of the royal widow, and Adelaide endured harsh and menacing treatment by her resistance to the proposal. But the time was past for attempting to strengthen the throne of Italy by crimes: Berenger had himself taught the nation that there existed beyond the Alps an avenger for the vices of the Lombard sovereigns. The people had witnessed his coronation with dissatisfaction, the clergy were touched with the piety of Adelaide, and the nobles dreaded to find a despot in a king without rivals. With one consent all orders of the state addressed themselves to Otho the Great, and entreated him to deliver Italy from the very king whom they had received from the asylum of his court as their liberator.

Berenger II. king of Italy.

Otho was not unwilling to accede to their prayer. He entered Italy, set queen Adelaide at liberty, afterwards espoused her, and, advancing to Pavia without resistance, received in that city the crown of Italy. But the affairs of Germany demanded his return before he could settle his new possessions, and he suffered Berenger to hold his kingdom of him as a fief. Some years after, however, the tranquillity of Germany again permitted Otho to direct his views towards Italy; and he found the reason or the pretext for interference, in the numerous complaints against Berenger which the pope and the Italian nobles ad-

Otho the Great, king of Italy. 951

Berenger II. his vassal.

CHAP. I. PART I.

dressed to him. He descended from the Alps a second time, deposed Berenger, and imprisoned him for life, and received at the hands of pope John XII., the imperial dignity, which had been suspended for nearly forty years. *

Berenger II. deposed. Otho the Great, emperor. 961

* Muratori, A.D. 888—961. Sismondi, vol. i. pp. 26—53.

PART II.

RISE AND GROWTH OF ECCLESIASTICAL AND PAPAL POWER—*Influence of the Clergy over the barbarian Conquerors of Italy—their Wealth and Power—Origin of the Popedom—Pontificate of Gregory I.—State of Rome from the fifth to the tenth Century—Separation of the Latin and Greek Churches—Donations of Pepin and Charlemagne to the Holy See—Disorders of the Papacy in the ninth and tenth Centuries*—SOUTHERN ITALY—*Rise of the Republics of Naples, Gaeta, and Amalfi—History of those States to the tenth Century*—REPUBLIC OF VENICE—*Its geographical Position—Origin and primitive Constitution of the Republic—Its first War—Change in the Form of Government—First Appointment of a Doge—War of Pepin, Son of Charlemagne, against the Venetians—their Victory—Building of Venice—Naval Wars of the Republic in the ninth and tenth Centuries—Capture of the Venetian Brides by the Pirates of Istria.*

AT the great epoch in Italian history, which united the crown of Lombardy to the empire of Germany, I have paused to consider detached parts of my subject which I have hitherto declined to notice, that the thread of the narrative might not be unnecessarily broken. It is an inherent difficulty in pursuing the current of the Italian annals, that instead of flowing in one great and uninterrupted channel, it breaks out into a multiplicity of smaller streams, whose devious and often mingled courses, the eye can with difficulty mark. In the progress of these volumes we shall

CHAP. I. PART II.

find Italy divided into as many independent republics and principalities as there are monarchies at this day in the whole western quarter of the globe: and, as all these small states have their separate histories, our transitions must be nearly as frequent, and almost as unconnected as they would be if the general history of Europe, and not that of Italy, were the object. To obviate, as far as is practicable, the inconvenience and obscurity thus arising from the very nature of the work, I have proposed to render the affairs of those governments, which for the time took the lead in Italian politics, the prominent matter of attention in every chapter, and afterwards to bring down the insulated history of less conspicuous states to the same period. I shall thus hope to bind the fragments of the subject together without much violation of chronological order or lucid narration. Proceeding upon this principle, I have hitherto held in view the kingdom of Lombardy only; and I am now, before I pass to the second chapter, to attempt a rapid sketch of the growth of Ecclesiastical Power, and of the rise of the republics of Naples, Amalfi and Venice, during the period of which I have treated, that is from the end of the fifth century to the coronation of Otho the Great.

When the barbarous nations of the north overthrew the power of Rome, they found the clergy endowed in every country of the empire with considerable possessions; and as the rude in-

vaders were themselves rapidly converted to Christianity, the lavish donations of a new piety were added to the former wealth of the church. The devotion of the barbarians, as it was less enlightened, was more munificent than that of the subjects of the empire. They brought from their forests, though they had changed their faith, the elementary principles of all barbarous idolatry; a superstitious reverence for the priesthood, a credulity that invited imposture, and a confidence that offences might be expiated by offerings to the altar. The crafty churchmen of those ages knew full well how to profit by the simplicity and religious fears of the northern conquerors. Donations of lands to the bishops, and, in still more ample proportion, to the monastic foundations, poured in from every side; whole provinces were bequeathed to different sees; to die without allotting a portion of worldly wealth to pious uses, was accounted almost like suicide; and monarchs, powerful lords, and petty barons, all felt the necessity of atoning for the disorders and crimes of their past lives by plundering their heirs in favour of the church. In this manner, before the entrance of Otho the Great into Italy, the most prosperous of its cities, and the most fertile of its districts, had passed into the hands of the episcopal and monastic clergy; who thus uniting temporal power with the paramount influence upon the laity, which the prejudices of a blind superstition ensured to them, exercised a double tyranny

Influence of the Clergy over the barbarian conquerors of Italy.

Their wealth.

And power.

CHAP. I. PART II.

RISE AND GROWTH OF ECCLESIASTICAL AND PAPAL POWER. 476—961

over conscience and property. The spiritual duties of their orders were scandalously forgotten in the rapacious pursuit of worldly authority and possessions; and the holy purity and sacred truths of Christianity were shamefully violated or perverted, by the practices and arts of its professors.

Origin of the Popedom.

But while the clergy were prosecuting a system of encroachments upon the laity, a new scheme was secretly forming within the bosom of the church, to subject both it and the temporal governments of Europe to an ecclesiastical monarch. The power of the popes was of very gradual and silent progression. We may agree with Ariosto in placing in the moon the donation of Constantine to the Roman see: but the Constitution of the same monarch, in 321, is the foundation of the wealth of the church. Religious pastors had, indeed, before accepted the liberality of their flocks, but a legal sanction was now given to their holding property of every description, and whether acquired by gift or testamentary disposition. Before the seat of the Roman empire was changed, the church was divided into three patriarchates—Rome, Alexandria, and Antioch. The bishoprics of Constantinople and Jerusalem were afterwards raised to the patriarchal rank.

From classical and religious prejudices the bishops of Rome were especially venerated. Rome, too, being often neglected by the emperors of the east, was left to its own defence.

The bishops, by their learning and talents, gained political ascendancy. For awhile they exercised their power with moderation, and it was a common saying that it was better to be governed by the crozier of a bishop than the sceptre of a king; but presumption grew with increase of authority, and the bishops at length became temporal as well as spiritual tyrants.* Before the end of the sixth century, the popes or bishops of Rome had so far succeeded in reducing the clergy of Italy to subjection, that their confirmation was necessary to the validity of episcopal elections. But the papal authority had made no decisive progress in any country of the west but Italy, until the pontificate of Gregory I., in the beginning of the seventh century. Ambition and enthusiasm were some of his qualities, and I may pass over both his sanctity† and his love of ignorance,‡ to notice that he was honorably distinguished by his paternal government of Rome.

* Bingham's Antiquities of the Christian Church, b. 9. and Spanheim's valuable Dissertation on the early History of the Territory of the Church, in the first volume of his works.

† He found great difficulty in persuading his clerical brethren to adopt his system of rigid self-denial. See Bayle Diction. Hist. art. Gregoire I. in F. That phrase of ostentatious humility, "servus servorum Dei," was first used by this Gregory, in affected contrast to the pride of his rivals, the bishops of Constantinople, who called themselves œcumenical, or universal bishops.

‡ He was a foe to the propagation of knowledge. His own senseless drivellings have been collected by a Benedictine monk into four folio volumes. Verily, the Roxburgh club can quote examples for their own precious reprints.

He maintained unceasing correspondence with the barbarian sovereigns of the west, and the hierarchy of the church; and in his pretensions, the divine authority and office of the successors of St. Peter were first clearly defined, and as strangely acknowledged by the ignorant nations to whom they were addressed.

For one hundred and twenty years after the death of Gregory, the power of the papacy received no remarkable accession, although the lapse of time was confirming its authority. But the schism produced by the controversy on image-worship, which separated the Latin from the Greek church in the eighth century, gave the next great impulse to the grandeur of the popedom, and gifted it with independent temporal authority over the city of Rome.

State of Rome from the fifth to the tenth century.

The condition of that once mighty and fallen capital of the world had been affected, until the invasion of the Lombards, by the same vicissitudes as the rest of Italy. Under the great Theodoric, its citizens had enjoyed the repose and happiness which were common to his kingdom; in the wars of his successors with the generals of Justinian, they had undergone every extremity of woe, for the city was five times taken and recovered by the Goths and the Greeks, before Narses had achieved the reduction of Italy, and established an imperial prefect in the Capitol. It is unaccountable by what means Rome escaped from the yoke of the Lombards: but they never

obtained possession of it, and the Italian fugitives who swelled its population from the provinces, perhaps, gave it strength to resist the conquerors. The Lombards were either Arians, or still buried in paganism; their heresies rendered resistance to them a struggle of religion; and the popes animated the defence of the citizens, and encouraged their fidelity to the eastern emperors. The pontiffs of this period, who were generally Romans by birth, and chosen by the clergy, senate, and people, appear to have merited their elevation by their virtues; and deserted by the feeble court of Constantinople, the Romans withdrew their respect and confidence from the emperors, to repose their obedience on nearer protectors.

Separation of the Latin and Greek Churches.

The disputes which agitated Christendom, respecting the worship of images, at length put a termination to the nominal authority of the eastern empire over Rome. The Latin church was attached to this superstitious practice; the Greek emperor, Leo the Iconoclast, (image-breaker,) issued his edict for the destruction of these objects of veneration; and pope Gregory II. (one of the brightest characters of modern history) authorized 726
the Romans to refuse obedience to his command, to renounce the imperial authority, and to establish the forms of an independent republic, of which the real power devolved on the papacy. This was a remarkable æra in the history of pontifical power, and the fall of the Lombard dynasty produced a second and yet more memorable one. Assuming the monstrous right of sanctioning the 754

CHAP. I. PART II.

RISE AND GROWTH OF ECCLESIASTICAL AND PAPAL POWER. 476—961

Donations of Pepin to the Holy See—and of Charlemagne. 800—814

usurpation of the French throne by the Carlovingian family, the popes received in return the assistance of Pepin and of Charlemagne, against the oppression of the Lombards. The donations which these monarchs bestowed upon the popedom, from the fruits of their Italian conquests, nominally comprized the Exarchate, and the Pentapolis of Romagna; and though the execution of the present by Charlemagne was evasive and partial, the Holy See was enriched by him with many considerable fiefs and substantial temporalities. *

Disorders of the Papacy in the ninth and tenth centuries.

It appears that these new possessions, which were sub-infeuded by the popes to military vassals, were a temptation for men of very different character to aspire to the papal chair, from those who had previously occupied it; and the annals of the Roman Catholic church are from this period sullied with the debasing and atrocious

849 crimes of its chiefs. One pope, Leo IV., who courageously defended Rome against a Saracen inroad, and who was the protector of his flock, merits to be excepted from the general infamy. † But I have no inclination to follow my authorities

* Eginhardi Annales, in ann. Galliard, Histoire de Charlemagne, 4 vol. (8vo.) Abbé St. Marc. Abrégé Chronologique de l'Histoire generale de l'Italie. It is to be regretted that this History of Italy closes with the year 1229. The worthy Abbé was very successful in brushing away the dust of Italian chronicles.

† Leo IV. is one of Voltaire's few Christian heroes. The sneering infidel has given a very animated picture of Leo's repulse of the Saracenian invasion of Rome. See Essai sur l'Histoire Generale, vol. i. cap. 18. ed. 1756.

through details of the enormous and scandalous vices which characterized the popes of the ninth and tenth centuries. Amidst a series of revolutions and crimes, six popes were deposed, two murdered, one mutilated; and for many years the supreme pontiffs were bestowed on the church by two women of rank and power, but of wanton and vicious character; Theodora and her daughter Marozia. The city was held by their lovers, commanded by the fortified houses of their dependants, and given over to the most terrible disorders. In this confusion, and in the darkness of the tenth century, which no contemporary historian has dispelled, the institutions of Rome seem to have been decidedly republican. The city was free from external dependence, and Hugo, the tyrant of Italy, who had endeavoured to plant his authority within its walls, by a disgraceful marriage with Marozia, was expelled by Alberic, her son by a former husband. Alberic had prevailed by the assistance of the people, and he afterwards governed as their patrician or consul. He was able at his death to bequeath his power to his son Octavian, who, willing to unite the spiritual and temporal authority once more, and in his own person, was consecrated pope under the title of John XII.; and it was from his hands that Otho the Great received the imperial crown. *

* Muratori, Annali. occasionally from the fifth to the tenth century. Sismondi, vol. i. pp. 117—151. Muratori alone has sometimes doubted the authority of Luitprand, bishop of Cremona, the contemporary historian of the disor-

CHAP. I. PART II.

STATE OF SOUTHERN ITALY. 476—961

Like Rome, Naples and the other cities of the south shared the common lot of the rest of Italy, from the suppression of the western empire to the conquests of Belisarius and Narses; and when the kingdom of the Lombards was founded in northern and central Italy, parts of the southern provinces were still preserved, with the Roman duchy and the Exarchate of Ravenna, to the sceptre of the Greek emperors. But the establishment of the great Lombard principality of Benevento (in the heart of the present Neapolitan dominions) interrupted the communication between their remaining Italian possessions, and separated Ravenna and Rome from each other, and from their maritime dependencies in Campania, Apulia, and Calabria. This separation produced the rise and independence of three republics, Naples, Gaeta, and Amalfi. The Lombard principality of Benevento occupied all the interior of southern Italy: its sovereigns, owing but a nominal obedience to the kingdom of their nation, were powerful, active, and enterprising; and their efforts were unceasing for several centuries to subjugate the territory which the Greek emperors still held in their vicinity. But all their attempts were unavailing, and many favourable circumstances combined to aid the maritime districts in successful opposition to them. The

Rise of the Republics of Naples, Gaeta, and Amalfi.

ders of the papacy in the tenth century. But the observation of Sismondi (p. 143.) seems conclusive in favour of the bishop's testimony, which even the ecclesiastical writers of the Romish Church have never discredited.

Greeks were masters of the sea; the emperors had caused the principal cities on the coast, whose sites were naturally advantageous, to be skilfully fortified; and the very inability of the court of Constantinople to afford the inhabitants troops to defend the works, was in itself a source of strength. For the people, left to their resources, and perceiving the security of their situation, were at no difficulty to guard their walls. In the repulse of frequent attacks they grew hardy, confident, and intelligent: they formed a militia; they elected their own civil magistrates and military officers; and the Greek emperors viewed without opposition the progress among them of a spirit of freedom which, however at variance with the despotic institutions of the rest of the empire, could alone prevent them from being wrested from it by the strong arm of the Lombard. The exarchs, as the imperial lieutenants in Italy, named the governors, or dukes, of the principal maritime towns, and exercised the shadow of sovereignty over them until the fall of Ravenna, after which the emperors themselves assumed the appointments.

In the sixth century, the Greeks had preserved some of the principal cities in Lucania and the Calabrias, and they subsequently, as the Lombard energies declined, even extended their power in those provinces. But they also possessed, on the south-western coast, in Campania, two small maritime districts—the duchies, as they were called, of Gaeta and Naples; and these two little pro-

CHAP. I. PART II. STATE OF SOUTHERN ITALY. 476—961

vinces alone merit our particular attention. The city of Gaeta, the capital of the first duchy, which extended between the Cæcuban and Massican mountains, so celebrated by Horace, was by situation nearly impregnable; for it stood on a rocky peninsula, connected with the continent by a low tongue of land. The duchy of Naples, farther south, comprehended a small territory round that city, and the neighbouring promontory of Sorrento, on which stood the town of Amalfi. And these three cities of Gaeta, Naples, and Amalfi, devoting themselves to commerce, and favored by their maritime position and strength, rapidly acquired wealth, naval power, and republican liberty. Farther separated from the empire than the shores of Calabria and Lucania, they consummated a more decided and brilliant independence than the other Greek cities. Choosing their own magistrates and imposing their own taxes, the citizens, at last, in the tenth century, began to elect the dukes, whom they had, until then, received from the eastern emperors. They were involved in perpetual hostilities with the princes of Benevento, who often penetrated to the foot of their walls: but their dependant villagers found a secure refuge in their castles. The citizens themselves, from behind their lofty battlements, defied the efforts of their besiegers; and as, before the invention of artillery, the means of defence, when aided by courage, were ever superior to those of attack, the assaults of the Lombards were constantly repulsed. Once only the little republic of Amalfi was betrayed by internal discord into

the hands of Sicard, prince of Benevento; but so untameable was the spirit of the Amalfitans, that, though their conqueror removed them all to his city of Salerno, they rose, on his death, in a body, returned to their ruined habitations, rebuilt their fortifications, and revived the prosperity of Amalfi with increased lustre. 839

The restoration of the republic of Amalfi was followed by a revolution in the principality of Benevento, which proved the ruin of the Lombard grandeur in southern Italy. Sicard, the oppressor of the Amalfitans, had incurred the hatred of all orders of his subjects; and he fell by the hands of conspirators. He had imprisoned his own brother, Siconolf, at Tarento, where he still remained at the period of this murder: and the citizens of Benevento, the Lombard capital, raised the treasurer, Radelchis, to the ducal throne. But the inhabitants of Salerno, adhering to the rights of Siconolf, combined with the Amalfitans to attempt his release; and for this purpose planned a secret enterprise. Some trading vessels, filled with merchants of Amalfi and Salerno, entered the harbour of Tarento, and the passengers, spreading themselves over the town in the evening, demanded aloud through the streets, after the manner of the times, hospitality for the night. Some of them were offered a lodging, as they had hoped, by the gaolers of Siconolf, who told them that they had a spare apartment at their service, and should be satisfied if they repaid the kindness by a small present on the

CHAP. I. PART II. STATE OF SOUTHERN ITALY. 476—961

morrow. The merchants entered, desired their hosts to purchase provisions for them, invited them to share their cheer, and, during the repast, plied them with wine until they were incapable of guarding their charge, who escaped with his deliverers to Salerno.

The double election of Siconolf and Radelchis, at Salerno and Benevento, was the cause of long and bloody civil wars, which terminated in the partition of the principality, and the decay and eventual fall of the Lombard power. In their struggle the rival princes each had recourse to the dangerous assistance of opposite sects of the Saracens, from Spain and Africa. Another musulman army had already conquered Sicily from
831 the Greeks: and, while the Christians were wasting their strength in discord, the infidels ravaged southern Italy, and established themselves in
846 several of its cities. They even besieged Gaeta, but the republics of Naples and Amalfi succoured that city; and the combined fleets of the three states, under the duke of Naples, afterwards contributed to the defeat of the Saracens by pope
849 Leo IV. Some years after, the emperor, Louis II. was drawn into southern Italy by the prayers of
866 the Lombards of the Beneventine duchy for protection against the Saracens. Uniting his arms to those of the eastern empire, he succeeded in expelling the infidels from most of their continental acquisitions; and, on the ruin of the Carlovingian family, the fleets of Constantinople, with a transient vigour, pursued the advantage,

drove the Saracens from all their conquests in Italy, (though they still preserved Sicily), and established a new Greek province, of which Bari was the capital. An officer, afterwards termed *catapan*, resided there, and directed the general administration of the possessions which the eastern empire now held in southern Italy.

The republics of Campania were the only powers, except the Greek empire, who possessed any fleets in the Mediterranean at this period. Their vessels—fitted alike for war and commerce—defended the territory, and yearly augmented the riches of Naples, Gaeta, and Amalfi. The last of these cities, after the recovery of its liberty, rapidly increased in population and wealth, and began to cover the seas with its gallies, and to possess itself of all the commerce of the east. Its citizens acquired a brilliant reputation for courage and wisdom; and, in the extinction of the freedom and existence of their little state, which we shall hereafter take occasion to notice, they have left to our times three legacies that entitle their memory to veneration. It was a citizen of Amalfi, Flavio Gisia, or Gioia, who invented the mariner's compass, or introduced it into the west; it was in Amalfi that the copy of the Pandects was found, which revived throughout Europe the study and the practice of the laws of Justinian: and it was, lastly, the maritime code of Amalfi which served as a commentary on the rights of nations, and as the foundation of the

CHAP. I. PART II. REPUBLIC OF VENICE. 476—961

subsequent jurisprudence of commerce and of the ocean. *

From observing the ephemeral splendour of Amalfi, we turn to contemplate the dawn of the long glories of Venice. † The origin of this cele-

* Sismondi, vol. i. pp. 211—246. I have followed the text of M. Sismondi in describing the rise of the republics of Campania; and, therefore, I do not feel at liberty to discard his repetition of the story, which attributes the revival in Italy of the study of the Roman civil law to the discovery of a copy of the Pandects at Amalfi, on the capture of that city by the Pisans, in the twelfth century. But I hesitate in adopting the confident belief of Sismondi, from observing the discredit which the elegant learning and accuracy of a late publication have thrown on the opinion.—(Travels of Theodore Ducas, vol. ii. p. 79.)

† The Neapolitan poet, Sannazarius, has half a dozen lines on Venice, which it has been the fashion of every writer to quote. The Italians have called the poet "elegant" and "tasteful," and the *barbarians* (including the author of Ducas, from whom better things might have been expected) have very meekly joined in the laudation. I shall not copy the stock quotation of Sannazarius; but, as something poetical is always expected on Venice, I shall, after referring my readers to Lord Byron (passim) and Rogers' "Italy," transcribe the following sonnet from another living poet—one of those little pieces whose chastened beauty may redeem the sin of a thousand puerilities and affectations:

"Once did she hold the gorgeous East in fee,
And was the safeguard of the West: the worth
Of Venice did not fall below her birth,
Venice, the eldest child of liberty.
She was a maiden city, bright and free;
No guile seduced, no force could violate:
And when she took unto herself a mate,
She must espouse the everlasting sea.
And what if she hath seen those glories fade,
Those titles vanish, and that strength decay;

brated republic must be dated even before the commencement of modern history; and its extinction has been among the great political vicissitudes of our own times. For so lengthened an existence, Venice was in a great measure indebted to its peculiar geographical position. All the streams which descend from the southern declivities of the Alps, find their outlet in the Adriatic, and empty themselves into the sea near the head of that gulf, along an extent of about ninety miles. This length of coast is fronted, at from twenty to thirty miles' distance from the shore, by a parallel line of several slips of land, with narrow openings between them; and the intermediate great basin, filled up by the gravelly and slimy deposits of the Alpine rivers, and studded with some hundreds of islets, is in no place covered by more than two or three feet of water; except where the rivers, breaking through it to find their way to the sea, by the openings in the external islands, have ploughed it into deep intersections, or natural canals, by the rapidity of their currents. The great shoals are termed the *Lagunes* of Venice; and, on the interior islets which rise from their surface, was the seat of the republic. Inaccessible from the continent by shallows, over which,

Geographical description of Venice.

> Yet shall some tribute of regret be paid
> When her long life hath reached its final day.
> Men are we, and must grieve when e'en the shade
> Of that which once was great is passed away."
>
> *Wordsworth's Miscellaneous Works*, vol. iii. p. 210.

only the light gondola can skim, the islets are of difficult and dangerous approach from the sea; for nothing but the experience of native pilots can guide a vessel through the narrow openings of the exterior land, and amongst the perplexing intricacies of the channels. But, improved by the aid of art, these canals are capable of admitting the largest friendly vessels to the wharfs of Venice; and are equally advantageous to the inhabitants for commerce and defence.

Origin and primitive constitution of the Venetian republic.

The Venetian islands were, probably, inhabited from the earliest ages, for the convenience afforded by their position for fishing and for the collection of salt, which accumulates almost naturally in the lagunes. And when the Gothic invasion, under Alaric, struck terror into the people of Italy, some of the inhabitants of the neighbouring continent fled for shelter from the barbarians to this maritime fastness, where, in the year 421, they built the little town of Rialto—the modern Venice. Thirty years later, the horrible devastation of the Huns, under Attila, drove the nobles and citizens from the flames of Aquileia and other places to the same refuge; and the towns of Grado, Caorlo, Palestrina, and Malamocco, rose among the islets. In this manner a new state sprang up amidst the lagunes, and, protected from all hostile approach, acquired a secure and silent independence. The emigrants from the continent, whose ruined fortunes had reduced them to a common equality, mingling with the fishermen of the islands, and compelled to labour for a sub-

sistence, grew industrious and active: invited by their situation to commerce, and inured by their occupations to the sea, they became enterprizing and courageous. Their light barks engrossed all the traffic of the neighbouring shores; and, in the distractions of the continent, the little ports of the lagunes were the only mercantile entrepôts of the coast. The rude constitution of the new state was, probably, that of a federative republic; for it would appear, by the earliest authentic documents which we possess of its condition, that it was governed by tribunes, of whom the people of each principal islet chose one, and who, administering the magistracy of their respective towns, met to deliberate upon the common interests of the whole republic. For all essential purposes, their state was in the exercise of freedom from its earliest establishment. To the hated barbarians, who successively ravaged Italy until the fall of the western empire, the Venetians acknowledged and paid no obedience; but there is evidence that they lived in amity with the government of the great Theodoric, and even submitted, in some measure, to receive his commands. And, much as the point has been disputed by the pride of their modern descendants, the Venetians certainly appear to have considered themselves subject, in a large sense, without violation of internal independence, to the eastern empire for several centuries after the conquest of Italy by Narses, whom they materially aided. They were interested in resistance to the Lom-

bard princes, and might naturally be led, by the memory of former allegiance to Rome, to transfer a nominal obedience to the court of Constantinople. *

* For many centuries, the proud pretensions of the Venetians to original and continued independence were tacitly assented to by the world. But, in 1612, a little volume in quarto was published, (according to the title-page, at Mirandola) called Squittinio della libertà Veneta, which excited more attention among the statists of Europe than any book that had appeared since the revival of letters. Who the author was, is as much unknown as the identity of Junius. The French nation, deceived by the Abbé St. Real, attributed it to the marquis of Bedemar; but dates and other facts contradict the supposition. Too much reliance therefore must not be placed even on the assertion of Bayle in this matter, (Lettres, vol. i. p. 150. Amst. 1729.) for he confesses that he had read the book only in French, and he took the tale of the authorship as he found it. His opinion however is just, that there never was any pretension more completely refuted than that of the Venetians, that their republic had an origin independent of the Roman empire. The Squittinio was composed with learning, spirit, and talent, and proved by clear deduction from public documents the former dependence of Venice upon the western empire, upon the Goths, the Greeks, and the German emperors. That a submission to the sovereignty of these last princes was recognized so late as the days of the emperor Henry IV., is admitted even by Sabellico, the zealous vindicator of Venetian freedom. He acknowledges that a cloth of gold and a tribute were delivered every year by the republic, but he endeavours to make the sum as small as possible: as if, says the author of the Squittinio, the amount of the tribute affected the confession of dependence—"come si il poco ò assai in questo genere alterasse la confessione della soggettione," p. 47. The Venetians, alarmed at the effect of this treatise on the European mind, hired a Dutch lawyer, one Theodore Graswinckel, to answer it. But this poor man of cases and subtilty could not beat down the facts, nor destroy the arguments of the Squittinio; and the Venetian senate then resorted to the last reason of tyranny—the fire. They burnt the book, and the world of course laughed

First war of the republic. 518—527

In the history of nations calamity is more prominent than happiness, and I proceed to observe, that the first national war in which the Venetians engaged, was produced by the necessity of protecting their commerce. The Sclavonians of the opposite coasts of Dalmatia, succeeding to the country and the manners of the ancient Illyrians, had betaken themselves to piracy; and the small trading vessels of the Venetians were particularly exposed to their depredations. The courage of the republicans was now equal to a struggle with the barbarians of the north; and the hardihood and energies which they had acquired by a seafaring life were successfully proved against the marauders. They boldly crossed over to seek them in their own ports, and commenced a series of enterprises which ended, before the close of the

at their impotent vengeance. Some copies however escaped the flames; and from one of them a French translation was made, and was published in 1677. A new edition of the work in Italian was wanted; but such was the scarcity of the original that no copy of it could be procured. The treatise was then translated back again into Italian from the French translation; and the new edition was a copy of the Italian-Frenchified-Italian book. Whether there was a third edition of the work, I know not; and indeed the book (though one of the most curious in literature) has not been much noticed by bibliographers. Peignot, who *does* mention it, knew nothing of its contents: for, like a faithful bibliographer, he only read the title-page and colophon and measured the margin of a volume.

I wonder that Mr. Hallam (vol. i. p. 471.) had not seen the Squittinio, considering that there are copies of both the editions which I have mentioned at the British Museum. The book has also escaped the critical notice of Sismondi.

CHAP. I. PART II. REPUBLIC OF VENICE. 476—961

tenth century, in their conquest of all Maritime Dalmatia.

While the republic was in this long period making trial of its strength, the form of its government underwent a remarkable change, and the extinction of its independence was almost effected by a foreign enemy. The tribunes of the islands had, by their ambition and frequent discords, occasioned a general disgust at the form of their administration. An authority so divided was, perhaps too, found inadequate to the conduct of the increasing powers of the state; and it was determined to replace the tribunes by a duke—or *doge* in their dialect. He was chosen for life by a general assembly, the exact composition of which is nowhere clearly marked. His powers were restrained for some centuries by no limitations, but the existence of general assemblies preserved the balance of the republic. Paolo Luca Anafesto was the first of these new sovereign magistrates, and under his government the resources of Venice were augmented, the Sclavonians were defeated, and the Lombards compelled to acknowledge the independent rights of the republic. But some of his successors abused their authority, and lost their lives in popular commotions; and the annals of the republic present, for a long period, a train of obscure revolutions and disorders which would ill repay our investigation. While these were in progress, the dynasty of the Lombards had been overthrown by Charlemagne; and the Venetians were yet torn by

Change in the Venetian form of government.

First appointment of a doge. 697

internal dissensions, when Pepin, the son of the emperor, who governed Italy under him, took advantage of their divisions to attempt the subjugation of the republic. He equipped a powerful fleet and army, succeeded in entering the Lagune, burnt several of its towns, and even captured Malamocco, then the capital of the republic. But Angelo Participazio, a citizen of distinction, preserved the fortunes of his country. He animated his fellow citizens to a continued resistance; and he had persuaded them to evacuate Malamocco, and remove their riches to Rialto, the position of which was more inaccessible, and in the centre of the Lagune. The fleet of Pepin, attempting to pursue them, was entangled in the shoals, and utterly defeated; and he retired in disgrace to Ravenna. In a subsequent peace between the Carlovingian and eastern empires, Venice was included as a dependancy of the Greek power.

War of Pepin, son of Charlemagne, against the Venetians. 809

Victory of the Venetians.

The gratitude of the Venetians raised Angelo Participazio to the ducal throne, which he had merited by his virtues; and during his glorious reign of eighteen years, Rialto became the lasting capital of the state. Sixty islets which surrounded it were joined to that town by bridges, and were shortly covered with new habitations. The ducal palace was raised on the site which it still occupies, and the new city of VENICE took the general appellation of the republic. Twenty years afterwards the body of St. Mark was transported from Alexandria to the new city: the saint became the

Building of Venice. 809—827

CHAP. I. PART II. REPUBLIC OF VENICE. 476—961

patron of the state; his lion was blazoned on the standard of the republic and stamped on its coin; and his name was identified with the pride and the power of Venice.

During the ninth, and the first sixty years of the tenth centuries,—from the government of Angelo Participazio, to the coming into Italy of Otho the Great—the Venetian affairs, with brief intervals of repose, were wholly occupied with civil commotions and naval wars. The doges of the republic were often murdered; its fleets were sometimes defeated; but, under every adverse circumstance, the commercial activity, the wealth, and the power of the state were still rapidly increasing. In the ninth century the Venetians, in concert with the Greeks, encountered, though with indifferent success, the navies of the Saracens; but the Narentines, and other pirates of Dalmatia, were their constant enemies, and were frequently chastised by the arms of the republic. The Venetian wealth invited attacks from all the freebooters of the seas, and an enterprise undertaken by some of them who had established themselves on the coast of Istria deserves, from its singularity and the vengeance of the republic, to be recorded in this place. According to an ancient custom, the nuptials of the nobles and principal citizens of Venice were always celebrated on the same day of the year and in the same church. The eve of the Purification was consecrated to this public festival, and the state annually increased the general joy of the occasion by endow-

Naval wars of Venice in the ninth and tenth centuries.

Capture of the Venetian brides, by the pirates of Istria. 944

ing twelve maidens with marriage portions. In the morning gondolas elegantly ornamented assembled from all quarters of the city at the episcopal church of Olivolo. The affianced pairs disembarked amidst the sound of music; their relations and friends in their most splendid habiliments swelled their retinue; the rich presents made to the brides, their jewels and ornaments were proudly borne for display; and the body of the people unarmed, and thoughtless of danger, followed the glad procession. The Istrian pirates, acquainted with the existence of this annual festival, had the boldness to prepare an ambush for the nuptial train in the city itself. They secretly arrived over night at an uninhabited islet, near the church of Olivolo, and lay hidden behind it with their barks until the procession had entered the church, when darting from their concealment they rushed into the sacred edifice through all its doors, tore the shrieking brides from the arms of their defenceless lovers, possessed themselves of the jewels which had been displayed in the festal pomp, and immediately put to sea with their fair captives and their booty. But a deadly revenge overtook them. The doge, Pietro Candiano III., had been present at the ceremony; he shared in the fury and indignation of the affianced youths, they flew to arms, and throwing themselves under his conduct into their vessels, came up with the spoilers in the lagunes of Caorlo. A frightful massacre ensued; not a life among the pirates was spared; and the victors returned in triumph

with their brides to the church of Olivolo. A procession of the maidens of Venice revived for many centuries the recollection of this deliverance on the eve of the Purification. But the doge was not satisfied with the punishment which he had inflicted on the Istriots. He entered vigorously upon the resolution of clearing the Adriatic of all the pirates who infested it; he conquered part of Dalmatia; and he transmitted to his successors, with the ducal crown, the duty of consummating his design. *

* Chron. Andriæ Danduli, pp. 1—227. (Scriptores Rerum Italicarum, vol. xii.) Vettor Sandi, Storia Civile di Venezia, vol. i. bb. 1, 2. pp. 1—297. Daru, Histoire de la Republique de Venise, vol. i. pp. 1—102.

Vettor Sandi was the last native historian of Venice, and his work (nine volumes, 4to.) is chiefly valuable as a treatise on the progress of the civil constitution of the republic. The first six volumes are, however, incomparably superior to the three last, both in merit and interest. But indeed the authority of Sandi has been almost superseded by the publication of the third work here cited. Its author, Count Daru, has enjoyed opportunities of consulting a far greater number of authentic documents than any preceding writer on Venetian history. He had not only free access to the secret archives of the extinguished republic after their removal to Paris; but his efforts seem to have been indefatigable in collecting such farther materials as the great libraries of the continent could afford. He has thus accumulated notices for his appendix on nearly four thousand manuscripts, above half of which he declares that he has personally inspected, while for the account of the remainder he stands indebted to different librarians. But his best claims to praise may rest on the judgment and ability with which he has used his resources; and his work (eight volumes, 8vo.) is a beautiful monument of the grandeur and fall of the mighty republic.

CHAPTER II.

FROM THE CORONATION OF THE EMPEROR OTHO THE GREAT, TO THE PEACE OF CONSTANCE, A.D. 961—1183.

PART I.

Reigns of Otho the Great—Otho II. and Otho III.—Continued Disorders of the Papacy—Rome under the Consul Crescentius —Probable State of the Lombard Cities during these three Reigns—The Crown of Lombardy disputed between Ardoin Marquis of Ivrea, and Henry II., King of Germany—Reign of the Emperor Conrad II. in Italy—Circumstances which introduced the great Struggle between the Empire and the Papacy for Ecclesiastical Investitures—Reign of the Emperor Henry III.—Scandalous State of the Papacy—Reformations—Reign of the Emperor Henry IV.—Pontificate of Gregory VII.—Character of the famous Countess Matilda—Contest between Henry and Gregory—Death of Gregory—The Struggle with Henry continued by his Successors—Deposition and Death of Henry IV.—Reign of the Emperor Henry V.—Prosecution of the Dispute for Ecclesiastical Investitures—Concordat of Worms —Termination of the Contest between the Papacy and Empire —Independence of the Lombard Cities—Their mutual Animosities and Oppressions of each other—Death of the Emperor Henry V.—Disputed Succession to the Empire—State of the Papacy—Reigns of the Emperors Lothaire and Conrad III. —Accession of Frederic Barbarossa to the Imperial Crown— His Character and ambitious Designs—Entrance of Frederic into Italy—Wars between the Emperor and the Milanese—

Blockade and Submission of Milan—Arbitrary Conduct of Frederic—Revolt of the Milanese—Second Blockade and Destruction of Milan—Subsequent tyranny of Frederic over the Cities of Lombardy—Resistance of the Cities and general League against Frederic—Rebuilding of Milan—Battle of Legnano—Establishment of the Independence of Lombardy—Peace of Constance.

CHAP. II. PART I.

Reign of Otho the Great. 961—973

DURING a reign of twelve years the emperor Otho the Great administered the government of Italy with vigour and prudence. The reputation of signal victories which he had gained over the Hungarians, the great power which he wielded as the common sovereign of Germany and Italy, and, more than all, the force of his personal character, ensured respect and obedience to his authority. His skilful policy cemented the dominion which he had acquired by the sword; the cities of Lombardy were attached to his rule by the blessings of peace which the kingdom enjoyed under his firm and tranquil administration; and the great Italian fiefs were dexterously weakened by his practice of separating districts from their jurisdiction under inferior marquisses and rural counts. He was engaged in a long war with the Greeks in southern Italy, which terminated amicably by an alliance between the two imperial families; but his relations with the popedom form the most remarkable events in his reign, of which contemporary historians have left any traces.

Affairs of the papacy.

Though pope John XII. had invited Otho into Italy, he soon perceived that he had only pre-

pared chains for himself by seeking the aid of so formidable a champion. The year after the emperor's coronation, he declared against him, and in favour of Berenger; but Otho marched to Rome and put him to flight. A council was assembled under the imperial authority, in that city, to judge the pope, the disorders of whose life were equally notorious and shameful; he was deposed, and Leo VIII. was consecrated in his place. But a large faction in Rome were partisans of the family of Alberic, of which John XII. was the representative; the citizens in general were ill-disposed to obey the commands of a foreign sovereign; and Otho had no sooner retired from the city than his pope was expelled. John returned to Rome and died before the emperor could depose him again; and the Romans elected Benedict V. to succeed him. But when Otho, at the head of his army, restored Leo VIII. in triumph to the papal chair, Benedict threw himself at the feet of his competitor, confessed that he was an usurper, and was exiled to Germany. Otho had thus deposed two popes, and on the death of Leo his will conferred the keys of St. Peter on John XIII. But the Romans still struggled against the yoke, and the presence of the emperor was once more necessary to restore the pope of his choice to the seat from whence the factious hatred, or independent spirit of the citizens, had driven him. Otho was then in Germany, but he crossed the Alps again; punished this rebellion, as he doubtless considered it, with

Deposition of two popes by Otho.

CHAP. II. PART I.

cruel severity, by the execution or exile of all the republican magistracy of Rome; and experienced no farther resistance from the inhabitants of that city during the few remaining years of his life, which he terminated near Magdeburgh, in

973 Germany.

Reigns of Otho II. 973—983

Otho the Great had associated his son, the second of his name, with himself in the empire during his life; but, after his decease, Otho II. was detained in Germany by a civil war, until the year 980, when he passed into Italy. His reign was less glorious than that of his father, for he was unsuccessful in the war which he renewed with the Greeks in southern Italy, and he found no leisure to interfere in the affairs of the pope-

And of Otho III. 983—1002

dom. After his death, the long minority of his son, Otho III., whom he had left an infant, was spent amidst civil wars in Germany; but the young monarch had no sooner attained manhood than he entered Italy, and asserted the imperial

Continued disorders of the papacy during the reigns of the three Othos.

authority. During his whole infancy the disorders of the papacy had continually increased. Perhaps no period of the pontifical history is altogether stained with deeper crime than that which is contemporary with the reigns of the three Othos. The atrocious and scandalous characters of several succeeding popes had inspired the citizens of Rome with contempt and hatred of their authority, and animated the democratic

Rome under the consul Crescentius. 980—998

spirit of a turbulent populace. They had again established a republican government, under the consul Crescentius, even in the reign of the se-

cond Otho, and, during the minority of his son, the temporal sovereignty of the popes was annihilated. But when Otho III. entered Italy, the posture of circumstances was reversed. He raised one of his relatives to the papal throne, by the title of Gregory V.; and the expulsion of this pontiff by Crescentius and the popular party drew down the imperial vengeance. Otho besieged and took the city, and crushed all resistance in the people by the execution of their consul, whom he had treacherously inveigled into his hands by promises of safety. Crescentius has sometimes been represented as a factious demagogue, sometimes as a patriot hero; but the annals of Rome at this period are so thickly shrouded in darkness, that it is impossible to determine on the real merits of his character. The perfidious manner of his death, at least, reflects infamy on Otho, who did not long survive him. He died in the flower of his age, and is said to have fallen by poison, which was administered to him by the injured widow of Crescentius. As he left no children, the imperial line of Saxony terminated in his person.

His capture and execution by Otho III. 998

1002

The dearth of historical records, and the meagre character of the few chronicles of the times, have entirely veiled from later researches a far more interesting subject of inquiry than the internal condition of Rome at this epoch.* If we could

Probable state of the Lombard cities during these three reigns. 961—1001

* Gibbon has marked the internal history of Rome, during the middle ages, as one of the most interesting subjects

CHAP. II. PART I.

clearly discern the state of the cities of Lombardy under the house of Saxony—a period of forty-one years—we should probably find them making rapid strides towards that republican freedom which they had certainly acquired at the end of the eleventh century. A philosophic historian has attributed to the first Otho the systematic design of elevating the Lombard cities, by charter, into free municipal communities, as a counterpoise to the power of the feudal nobility, of whose obedience he might reasonably be distrustful. But no evidence has been preserved of the fact, nor are there any archives of these cities extant of earlier date than the twelfth century; and it is therefore unsafe to follow a supposition which nothing remains to substantiate. There were however causes in action which, without resorting to hypothesis, may in a great measure account for the subsequent emancipation of the Lombard cities. We have referred to the erection of their walls against the Hungarian invasions, which preceded the reigns of the Othos, and to the practice, which was undoubtedly adopted by the first of those monarchs, of diminishing the extent of the great fiefs. By the former circumstance the cities acquired the means of defence; by the latter, the power of the feudatories was so much subdivided, that the count, or

of human contemplation. In this instance it was with the great historian, as with the vulgar, omne ignotum pro magnifico est.

governor of a town, scarcely ruled beyond the precincts of its walls, and remained amongst the citizens without rural vassals, and therefore with no more than a nominal authority over the numerous inhabitants. Very many too of the oppidan signories were assigned to bishops, naturally less warlike than lay chieftains, and indebted in some measure to the citizens themselves for their election to their sees. With arms in their hands, the consciousness of their own strength and the weakness of their temporal and ecclesiastical lords could not fail to inspire the citizens with ideas of independence. The three Othos passed twenty-five years out of Italy: their successors were less powerful, their reigns more disturbed, and the intervals of their absence from Lombardy yet longer and more frequent. A sovereignty so often interrupted could not be strongly exerted, and nothing remained to control the growth of municipal liberty. *

The crown of Lombardy disputed between Ardoin, marquis of Ivrea, and Henry II. king of Germany.

The death of Otho III. without children, terminated the engagement by which Italy had bound herself to the emperors of the Saxon line. Her obedience was not equally due to every sovereign whom the princes of Germany might place on their throne; and, therefore, while the latter made choice of the duke of Bavaria for their king, by the title of Henry II. a diet of the lay and ecclesiastical lords of Italy assembled at Pavia, and 1002

* Sismondi, vol. i. pp. 91—101. 151—166. 365—408. Muratori, A.D. 961—1002. Hallam, Middle Ages, vol. i. pp. 327—330. 337—341.

CHAP. II. PART I.

bestowed the crown of Lombardy upon Ardoin, marquis of Ivrea. But such was already the rivalry between Milan and Pavia, that it was sufficient for the election of Ardoin to have taken place in the latter city, to disaffect the Milanese to his authority. Arnolph, their archbishop, too, had been absent from the assembly at Pavia; and, supported by his citizens, he protested against an election to which, as first ecclesiastical prince of Italy, he had given no assent. He convoked a new diet at Roncaglia, near Milan; and, in concert with many of the Italian nobles who were
1004 hostile to Ardoin, elected Henry II. to the Lombard throne. That monarch, entering Italy, and possessing himself of Pavia, was there crowned by the archbishop of Milan, and obliged Ardoin to retire into his patrimonial fiefs.

Burning of Pavia. 1004

On the day of Henry's coronation, his German followers, in the drunken riot of the occasion, having insulted some of the citizens of Pavia, were driven out of the town: the king was besieged in his palace; and his army, which was encamped under the walls, could only penetrate through the barricadoed streets to his succour by setting fire to the houses. The superb capital of Lombardy was reduced to ashes; a frightful massacre ensued; and, when the surviving inhabitants, on the retirement of their enemies, rebuilt the town, a fresh motive was added to that hatred of the German nation which a large proportion of the Italians entertained. But the intrusion of these foreigners was scarcely felt during the sub-

sequent reign of Henry. He passed little of his time in Italy. Ardoin still asserted his pretensions; and the contest between the rivals was maintained rather by the mutual hostility of their adherents than by their personal exertions. After an interval, however, of ten years, Henry, in a second expedition into Italy, received the imperial crown at Rome; and, by the support which he gave to pope Benedict VIII. checked the republican spirit of the citizens, whom we find now governed by a son of Crescentius, with the title of patrician. The emperor appears to have encountered no opposition on his march from Ardoin, who shortly afterwards resigned the pomp of royalty, and retired into a monastery, thinking that between the business and the close of life some space should intervene.

Coronation of the emperor Henry II. 1014

1015

On the death of Henry, the Italians were again inclined to free themselves from their connection with Germany. But neither Robert, king of France, nor the duke of Guienne, to both of whom they offered the crown of Lombardy, were disposed to involve themselves in the pursuit of a disputed honour: and Eribert, archbishop of Milan, who had conducted these intrigues, and other Lombard lords, made a merit of necessity, and, repairing to Conrad II. (the Salic) duke of Franconia, the successor of Henry on the German throne, tendered him the sovereignty of Italy, which he was ready to claim as a dependency upon his crown. Neither Conrad nor his successors were ever regularly elected to reign over

1024

Reign of the emperor Conrad II. in Italy. 1024—1039

CHAP. II. PART I.

Italy; but we may date from this æra that subjection of the kingdom to the Germanic electoral body which became an unquestioned right.

General wars among the feudal orders during the reign of Conrad.

The reign of Conrad II. is remarkable only in Italian history for the civil wars which broke out between the vavassores and their feudal superiors, and between the former again and their lower vassals; and for the ineffectual efforts of the emperor to restore tranquillity by a famous edict which regulated the feudal law of Italy.

1035 In one of these internal struggles the vavassores who held of the archbishop of Milan rose in arms against his oppression: the citizens supported their prelate; the war was carried on even in the streets of the city; and the nobility were, at length, expelled from its walls. These and similar contests throughout Lombardy continued without intermission. The emperor, opposing himself to the ecclesiastical lords and their cities, vainly strove to put a period to the struggles by his arms; and it was not until just before his death that a pacification was effected. The vavassores were compelled to abrogate the most obnoxious of their feudal privileges in favour both of their military vassals and their serfs; and they began, from this period, to feel the necessity of putting themselves under the protection, and to share the citizenship, of the great towns in their vicinity. *

* Sismondi, vol. i. pp. 101—115. Muratori, A.D. 1002—1039.

CHAP. II. PART I.

We have now arrived at the real commencement of that memorable period which is distinguished by the struggle between the empire and the papacy for ecclesiastical investitures; a struggle which, during the reigns of the two emperors of the house of Franconia who succeeded Conrad the Salic and his son Henry III., engrosses the history of Italy, and which terminated, as the course of subsequent events most clearly proved, in reversing the possession of power, and in reducing the emperors to a humiliating bondage to papal tyranny. During the reign, indeed, of Henry III. who, on the death of his father Conrad, was recognized as king of Germany and Italy, the struggle neither began nor could be foreseen; but it was certainly prepared by the reforms which he effected in the state of the papacy. It was some years before he had leisure to take possession of the crowns of Lombardy and the empire; but when he, at length, entered Italy, he found the holy see in shameful disorder. Three popes, all of whom had purchased their elections by infamous simony, claimed, at once, the obedience of the Church, and divided the possession of the city. The emperor, with the support of his army, obliged the citizens to renounce the right of election which they had so scandalously abused; procured the deposition of the three rival pontiffs by the decision of a council; and filled the chair of St. Peter by his own presentation. The new pope, Clement II. conceded to him, for the future, an explicit right of

Circumstances which introduced the great struggle between the empire and the papacy for ecclesiastical investitures.

Reign of the emperor Henry III. 1039—1056

1046

Scandalous state of the papacy.

Henry's virtuous exercise of power over papal elections.

CHAP. II. PART I.

nomination, as the only means of raising the Church from the abyss of depravity into which she had fallen; and Henry, piously acting against the dictates of a selfish policy, in the sequel appointed three successors to Clement of characters to reform the manners of the clergy, and to purify the morals of the holy see. The consequences of these measures were not experienced by Henry himself; but, on his death, and during the minority of his son Henry IV., they soon became visible.

Character and influence of the monk Hildebrand, afterwards pope Gregory VII.

The last of the popes appointed by Henry III. had been recommended to him by the monk Hildebrand, by far the most conspicuous personage of the eleventh century. This extraordinary man was distinguished by dauntless courage, immeasurable ambition, and stern unconquerable energies. In the hardening solitude of the cloister he had utterly estranged himself from all the kindly affections of our nature, and discarded from his heart every feeling of humanity or conscience, which has commonly power to turn men aside from the relentless execution of iniquitous projects. Unshackled by personal ties, and standing aloof from the ordinary relations of life, his ambition assumed the colouring of pious duty to the Church, and his exertions the merit of resolutely upholding ecclesiastical rights. He found the papacy subjected to the imperial authority; he determined to elevate it above all temporal power; and he succeeded. The subsequent grandeur of the popedom is plainly attributable to the views

which he opened and the purpose which he developed. The impulse given by his character to ecclesiastical pretensions continued after his death, and was prolonged until it had established the absolute supremacy of the popes over all the temporal monarchs of Europe. Even before the death of Henry III. Hildebrand, who originally filled an inferior office in the Roman Church, had, by his singular qualities, acquired a paramount influence in ecclesiastical affairs. By his lofty views of aggrandizement for the Church he excited the enthusiastic hopes of the Italian clergy; he gained an unbounded ascendancy over their minds; and he was regarded as their chosen leader, and the hope of their common cause. We are not told how he acquired an almost equal sway over the senate and people of Rome, but it is certain that, upon one occasion, they empowered him singly to nominate a pope on their part. For twenty years before his own elevation to the tiara, Hildebrand, the ruling spirit of the papal councils, the tutor and director of the pontiffs, was regarded as something greater than the popes themselves. And it might surprize us that he did not sooner place himself in their chair, if it were not natural to suppose that the clear judgment which regulated his ambition equally taught him the fitting moments for its self-denial and indulgence.

Measures of Hildebrand for reforming the clergy and ele-

The reformation of the clergy was wisely seen by Hildebrand to be necessarily the first step towards the meditated superiority of the spiritual

CHAP. II. PART I.

vating the power of the Church.

order. He felt that the respect of a superstitious age—the best foundation for this superiority—would be most readily secured to the priesthood by the reputation of austerity. By the act of the popes he, notwithstanding much opposition, rigorously enforced upon the secular clergy the celibacy enjoined by the canons of the Romish Church, but which hitherto had been little regarded. By thus cutting off the ecclesiastical body from the affections of domestic life, he not only acquired for them the veneration of the ignorant laity, who, in those times, had a strange respect for monastic virtues, but rendered them independent of all other feelings than devotion to the common interests of the Church. The next and bolder measure of Hildebrand was directed against the simoniacal purchase of ecclesiastical benefices, which certainly had reached a disgraceful height. The practice was denounced as infamous, and forbidden on pain of excommunication.

Enforcement of celibacy. 1058

Edict against simony.

Prohibition of investitures by laymen. 1059

The passage was easy from the decree which forbade the purchase of a church benefice from a lay lord, to that which extended the same prohibition to the acceptance of investiture, upon any terms, from the hands of the laity. Both the inferior clergy and the bishops had originally, in the early ages of the Church, been elected by the people of their respective parishes and sees. But, when monarchs and great feudal lords piously bestowed endowments of land on the Church, they naturally reserved to themselves and their

successors the right of presentation to the ecclesiastical benefices which they created. As these grants seemed to partake of the nature of fiefs, they required similar formalities—investiture by the lord, and an oath of fealty by the tenant. The Church had fairly forfeited part of her independence in return for ample endowments and temporal power: nor could any claim be more reasonable than that the investiture of spiritual as well as lay fiefs should be received from the feudal superior. The worth of a benefice was estimated by the rapacious churchman according to the value of its temporalities; and the patron in whose gift these were placed became the real elector. The right of nomination thus passing from the people, devolved, in effect, upon monarchs and feudal lords, who exercised the prerogative for more than two centuries without opposition or scandal; and invested the new bishops with the ring and crosier, as visible symbols suited to the spirit of feudal institutions. The abolition of this practice of lay investiture was an essential part of the scheme which Hildebrand had formed for emancipating the spiritual, and subjugating the temporal powers. The notorious bribery which was frequent in lay presentations, afforded him a plausible reason for abolishing them: and, under his influence, the papal denunciations were thundered against their continuance.

Remarkable change in the form of papal elections.

The edict against lay investitures was not immediately applied to the election of the popes themselves; but Hildebrand obtained a cele- 1059

CHAP. II. PART I.

brated decree of pope Nicholas II. which was intended as a preparation for this extension of the principle. By this remarkable instrument the form of papal elections was established much on the foundation which has continued to this day. The choice of the supreme pontiff was vested in the cardinals, with the subsequent concurrence of the laity of Rome; and the new pope was finally to be presented for confirmation to the emperor. Not only were the citizens of Rome thus excluded thenceforward from their effectual participation in papal elections, but the emperors were deprived of their ancient legal prerogative of nomination to the holy see, to receive in exchange an empty and precarious right of approval.

Reign of the emperor Henry IV. 1056—1106

The long minority of Henry IV. had been judiciously chosen for this series of papal encroachments. But the moment was at length arrived at which the relative strength of the empire and the papacy was to be put to the trial. Henry IV. reached his manhood; and, precisely at the same period, Hildebrand entered the lists against him as the recognized head of the Church, whose councils he had long directed. On the death of pope Alexander II. against whom the German court and their party in Italy had vainly set up an anti-pope Honorius II., Hildebrand was elected to the vacant chair of St. Peter, by the title of Gregory VII. Henry was too proud and too valiant to submit to the disgraceful yoke which Gregory had prepared for the imperial authority; but his character singularly disqualified

Pontificate of Gregory VII. 1073

him for the encounter with an adversary at once so cool, so wily, and so resolute. The temper of the young monarch was generous and noble, but his education had been faulty; he surrendered himself with little restraint to the impetuosity and excess of youthful passions, and disgusted his German subjects by arbitrary and despotic conduct. Gregory tampered with their disaffection, and craftily used the advantage which the disorders of Germany afforded to his views. But his strength might have been unequal to an open contention with the empire if he had not been supported by the fanatical superstition and heroic courage of a woman. Matilda, countess of Tuscany, had just at this epoch united in her person the inheritance of that and other great fiefs and provinces which had accrued by marriages to her house. Her vast possessions gave her extraordinary power at this juncture, and she blindly and zealously devoted its exclusive exercise to the service of the church. Joining the excessive weakness and trembling credulity of female superstition to a masculine energy of character in other respects, she was a fitting associate or instrument for Gregory. Her fanaticism or ambition was as great and as exclusive as his own, but it differed from his ruling passion in this, that her devotion was to a cause which could yield her no temporal return, his to a throne which he had only laboured to plant on high, that he might seat himself on it above the powers of the world. Wedding herself to the maintenance of ecclesiastical rights, Ma-

Character of the famous countess Matilda.

CHAP. II. PART I.

tilda had no place in her heart for softer feelings; she separated from two husbands successively because they did not share her absurd attachment to the papacy; she adhered with unshaken fortitude through all vicissitudes to Gregory and his successors; and, finally, she bequeathed at her death all the possessions of which she was entitled to dispose, to the holy see for the supposed salvation of her soul.

1115

Contest between Henry and Gregory.

Fortified by the allegiance and resources of this religious amazon, Gregory began by excommunicating some of Henry's ministers on pretence of simony, and remonstrated with the emperor because they were not immediately dismissed. He next renewed the papal edicts against lay investitures, and finally, as the consummation of insolence, cited Henry himself to appear at Rome, and vindicate himself from the charges of his rebellious subjects. Such insults filled the inexperienced and passionate monarch with violent indignation. He assembled a number of his prelates and other vassals at Worms, and procured a sentence that Gregory should no longer be re-

1076

cognized as legitimate pope. But the time was past for such strong and decisive measures, and the relations of power between the empire and papacy were now reversed. Gregory solemnly excommunicated Henry, and in turn released his subjects from their oaths of allegiance. Disaffection and superstition combined against the emperor; the German prelates fled from his side at the sound of the excommunication; he was de-

serted as a person tainted with some horrible infection; and his malcontent subjects transferred their obedience to the duke of Swabia. In this reverse of fortune the courage of Henry forsook him; and he had recourse to the miserable and ignominious expedient of submitting to the pope, and crossing the Alps in the depth of winter to solicit absolution. Bare-footed, and clothed only in a woollen shirt, he abjectly stationed himself in the outer court of the castle of Canossa, near Reggio, where Gregory then resided with the countess Matilda, and remained for three whole days thus exposed to the severity of the season, before he could obtain admission into the presence of the pope, and receive absolution at his hands. But this base humiliation, instead of conciliating his enemies, only procured for him universal contempt. His friends were indignant at his abjectness, the pope was not the less resolved on his ruin, and Henry was rouzed by the conflicting dangers of his position to a more manly spirit. He broke off his treaty with Gregory, and resolved to fall, if to fall was inevitable, as the defender, not the betrayer, of the imperial rights. Fortune smiled upon his recovered intrepidity. The insolence of the pope excited indignation both in Germany and in Italy: in the former country the duke of Swabia was defeated and slain, in the latter the troops of Matilda were routed by the imperialists, and the emperor received his crown at Rome from the anti-pope Guibert, whom he had raised to the papal throne.

CHAP. II. PART I.

1077

1084

CHAP. II. PART I.

Gregory, in misfortune and flight, still supported himself by the unshrinking pride of his nature: he was compelled to seek a refuge among the Normans of Naples, and he died in exile; but he repeated with his last breath the excommunications which he had hurled against Henry, the anti-pope, and their common adherents. *

Death of Gregory. 1085

The death of so formidable and inveterate an antagonist produced little respite for Henry in his struggle with the church. The successors of Gregory, Urban II. and Paschal II., prosecuted his views and as strenuously supported the great contest for ecclesiastical independence. They raised enemies to Henry in the bosom of his family, supported his sons in unnatural rebellions, and drew upon him the fanatical hostility of the leaders of the first crusade on their passage through Italy. For twenty years the unhappy emperor was persecuted by the unrelenting hatred of the pontiffs, wearied with incessant hostilities, and loaded with anguish by the infamous revolt of his children. He was at length treacherously deposed by the parricidal hands of his second son, Henry, and died in old age and misery, broken-hearted and destitute.

The struggle with Henry continued by his successors.

Deposition and death of Henry IV. 1106

* "Gregory VII." says Jortin, "had all the marks of Antichrist upon him, and his religion was nothing more than grimace. He wrote a very complaisant letter to a Mahommetan prince, in which he says to him, 'You and we adore one and the same God, though in a different manner. I wish you everlasting happiness in Abraham's bosom.' Good." Remarks on Ecclesiastical History, vol. iii. p. 129.

Reign of the emperor Henry V. 1106—1125

Prosecution of the dispute for ecclesiastical investitures.

Both pope Paschal II., who had remorselessly instigated Henry V. to criminal violence towards his father, and the young emperor himself, who had unnaturally upheld the cause of the church against his parent, reaped the just fruits of their iniquity. Paschal was betrayed and imprisoned by the prince who had been his guilty confederate; and Henry, on his part, was long troubled and finally humiliated by the ecclesiastical power for whose alliance he had violated every filial duty. For above fifteen years of his reign he was arrayed in open opposition to the church in the struggle for the right of ecclesiastical investiture; and successive popes still maintained against him a strenuous opposition to this prerogative. As he was stronger in the support of his German vassals than his father had been, the pontiffs were never able to proceed to similar extremities with him, and a long and injurious contest was protracted without any decisive success. At length, in the pontificate of Calixtus II., both parties had become utterly exhausted and weary of this ruinous struggle, and a treaty was concluded at Worms, which set at rest the question of ecclesiastical investiture. The compromise which affected a pacification was so simple an expedient, that it might at first sight astonish us that it was not sooner adopted, since it appeared at the time equally to satisfy both the opponents. The emperor resigned the spiritual, the pope his claim to the temporal prerogative of investitures. The former recognized the liberty of episcopal

Concordat of Worms. 1122

Termination of the contest between the papacy and empire.

CHAP. II. PART I.

elections, and renounced all pretence of investing bishops with the ring and crozier; the latter agreed that elections should always be made in presence of the emperor or his officers, and that the new bishop should then receive the temporalities of his see from the feudal sovereign by the type of the sceptre. The compact wore the appearance of equity; but it was only the exhaustion of long and destructive wars which had reduced the partizans either of the church or the empire to a reasonable moderation. Yet we may rather make allowances for the tenacity with which the emperors clung to the rights of centuries, than for the fierce and unholy ambition which actuated the pontiffs to the support of novel and intolerable pretensions: and the emperors might with justice fear to make any concessions to such audacious and overbearing antagonists. Even while the success seemed in the issue of the contest to be equally balanced, the emperors had lost a valuable part of their former prerogative, the popes had acquired a degree of power corresponding to that of which they had deprived the empire, and the progress of subsequent events proved that the victory had remained with the church. *

Independence of the Lombard cities in the early part of the twelfth century.

Before the close of the great contest about ecclesiastical investitures, the towns of northern Italy had silently perfected the formation of their

* Sismondi, vol. i. pp. 168—210. Hallam, vol. ii. Chapter on Ecclesiastical Power, pp. 249—268. and the Ecclesiastical History of the candid and rational Mosheim, cent. 11. part 2.

free constitutions, and Lombardy contained almost as many republics as there were cities within its limits. Debarred from all acquaintance with the progress of these states towards independence during the long wars between the empire and papacy, we must be contented to describe their political condition as it existed in the first part of the twelfth century. At that period the new republics had succeeded in overpowering nearly the whole of the rural nobility in their vicinity; and it is asserted by a contemporary chronicler, that before the middle of the century there was scarcely any feudal nobleman to be found who had not submitted to some city. It was the object of the civic communities at once to break the independence and to conciliate the affection of the nobles; and it was, therefore, an invariable provision in the treaties which admitted them to the rights of citizenship, that they should reside for some months in the year within the walls which contained the strength of the republic. Thus deprived of the authority which they had enjoyed in their castles, the nobility gave a new direction to their ambition, and aspired to the highest offices in the government to which they were attached. The respect which the prejudices of mankind have ever conceded to high birth and fortune obtained for the nobles the object which they coveted, and in all the Lombard republics the principal dignities of the magistracy were long entrusted to the superior families. It may, however, be presumed that the haughty spirit of

CHAP. II. PART I.

the feudal aristocracy could with difficulty endure the assumption of equality in a class of men upon whose condition they had been habituated to look with contempt; while on the other hand the burghers, in the insolence of rising importance, were not likely to use their success with moderation, still less to brook any outrage of the rights of a free democracy. On one occasion, in particular, at Milan, a casual insult, offered in the streets by one of the nobles to a plebeian, was the cause of a furious commotion, in which the fortified residences of the nobles within the walls were demolished in one day by the citizens, and their order a second time expelled from the city. But the inhabitants depended for food upon the surrounding country, which the banished nobles held with their retainers; the nobles on their part had already found themselves too weak to support a contest with the citizens, and both factions were prudent enough to discover that their common interests were identified with the safety of the state. A pacification was effected, and the nobles resumed their abode in the city and their share in its government.

1041

1044

Civil constitution of the cities.

The supreme administration of affairs in the Lombard republics, both in peace and in war, was entrusted to consuls, of whom there were usually two, though in some instances more. At once the judges and generals of the state, they were elected annually by the votes of the citizens, and it was their business to convoke the general assemblies of the republic upon extra-

ordinary occasions. But as these bodies were too numerous for the convenient dispatch of current affairs, two councils were chosen by the people to assist and control their magistrates. The smaller and more select of these, that of the credenza or secrecy, regulated financial concerns, guided the external relations of the republic, and watched over the conduct of the consuls: the other, the senate or great council, permanently represented the sovereign people. Every law or measure of national importance necessarily received the approval of the council of credenza and of the senate, before it could be submitted to the general assembly of the people, which, at the sound of the great bell of the city, met in some public place to ratify or annul the proposition.

Their military system.

The military system of the republics was assimilated to the forms of their civil government. The consuls commanded the levies, and the people chose their own officers of inferior rank. The cities of Lombardy were divided, usually according to their number of gates, into several quarters: each of these had its standard, and gonfalonier or ensign bearer, under whose direction the inhabitants, whenever an enemy threatened, rushed in arms to their proper gate and to the neighbouring ramparts, with the defence of which they were specially charged. Every citizen was bound to serve the state, the artisans on foot, the gentlemen on horseback. The former were arrayed in bands of infantry according to the

CHAP. II. PART I.

quarter which they inhabited: the latter were enrolled into troops of cavalry, of which each city boasted one or more. Of the infantry chosen portions in every quarter were armed, lightly with the cross-bow, heavily with the iron helmet, the lance, and the buckler; but the mass of the citizens had no other trust than their swords. The mounted nobles, armed cap-a-pie,* fought with the lance and in hauberks, or coats of twisted mail.*

Singular invention of the carroccio.

But a singular invention marked at once the rudeness and the wisdom of the tactics which regulated the free militia of Lombardy. This was the carroccio, or great standard car of the state: it is said to have been first used by Eribert, archbishop of Milan, in the war of 1035, in which the citizens supported him against the rural nobility, and it soon came to be introduced into the array of all the republics. It was a car upon four wheels, painted red, and so heavy that it was drawn by four pairs of oxen, with splendid trappings of scarlet. In the centre, raised upon a mast, which was crowned by a golden orb, floated the banner of the republic, and, beneath it, the Saviour extended on the cross appeared to pour benediction on the surrounding host. Two plat-

* If the reader be curious for more information on this subject of Italian armour, I can confidently refer him to the posthumous work of Muratori, called "Dissertazioni sopra le antichita italiene," 3 vols. fol. Without the guidance of Muratori, I should perpetually stumble in my Italian journey.

forms occupied the car in front and behind the mast, the first filled with a few of the most valiant soldiers of the army, the chosen guard of the standard, the latter with a band of martial music. Feelings of religion and of military glory were strangely associated with the carroccio. It was an imitation of the Jewish ark of the covenant, and it was from its platform that a chaplain administered the holy offices of Christianity to the army. It thus became sacred in the eyes of the citizens, and to suffer it to fall into the hands of an enemy entailed intolerable disgrace. The thickest of the battle ever encircled the carroccio: it guided the advance, the duty of its defence gave order and a rallying point in retreat, and it was in every situation calculated to remedy the absence of discipline and the unskilfulness of military movement which belonged to that age. It afforded a common centre, a principle of weight and depth and solidity, to the untrained infantry of the citizens, and enabled them to resist without difficulty the impetuous charges of the feudal chivalry. In this respect the carroccio was a most sagacious expedient, and completely answered the purpose of its inventor, in rendering the cavalry of the feudal nobles powerless against the thick masses of the burghers; and, if the movements of the car were incompatible with celerity of operations, this defect could be little appreciated where to move without confusion at all had been previously unknown. To march straight forward towards an enemy, and to fight,

CHAP. II. PART I.

were the only tactics: the ranged battle, or the predatory incursion to carry off the harvests of a foe, the only business of a campaign.

Advantages possessed by the fortified cities in the superiority of the means of defence to those of attack.

The confidence which the Lombard citizens acquired in the field, was wrought to a tone of insolent defiance from the security which they enjoyed within the walls of their towns. Until after the invention of gunpowder, the means of defence for fortified places were greatly superior to those of attack. The moveable towers, penthouses, battering rams, and machines for throwing stones and darts, usual in ancient sieges, continued with little change to form the only resources of the middle ages in the assault of fortresses; and these cumbrous engines of offence were advantageously opposed by the thick and lofty walls, flanked by towers, and fronted by a broad and deep moat, which composed the defences of cities. Within these strong bulwarks and impassable trenches, and in the midst of well peopled streets, the industrious citizens of Lombardy dwelt secure from the licence of freebooters and the oppression of feudal tyrants. Their crafts became respectable and even honorable; they grew wealthy and numerous; and many of their cities attained a larger population than the capitals of any of the European kingdoms of the age.

Principal cities of Lombardy.

Pavia and Milan had long been the greatest among these cities, and with the increase of riches and power their early rivalry darkened into inveterate hatred. Pavia, seated at the confluence

of the Tesino and the Po, seemed to hold the keys of the Lombard waters, and her barks, laden with the produce of the fruitful plains through which these rivers flow, descended into the Adriatic and exchanged their raw freights for the manufactures and the merchandize of Venice. The population and riches of Pavia swelled the pride which she inherited as the ancient capital of the Lombard kings, and the site of their palaces; but, in numerical strength and in real importance, she was still second to Milan. That city had perhaps preserved a large population from the times of the Roman empire: the surrounding country is luxuriantly fertile, the climate is pure and healthful; but these advantages were equally enjoyed by other Lombard cities, and it must have been from some unexplained cause that Milan outstripped them all in the number and riches, the warlike spirit, and the profitable industry of her inhabitants. The city of Cremona was next in consequence to these two great rival capitals; and Lodi, Crema, Como, Tortona, Brescia, Novara, Bergamo, and, farther off, Modena, Parma, Verona, Reggio, Placentia, Ferrara, and Bologna, were among the considerable cities which were invigorated by the genius of freedom.

Their mutual animosities and oppression of each other.

But, unhappily, the conduct pursued by these republics in their external relations was not always of a character to merit that interest in their fate which the spirit that breathed through their free institutions is so powerfully calculated to excite. With that restless desire of tyrannizing

CHAP. II. PART I.

over weaker neighbours from which a democracy is seldom exempt, they played over again, as has been truly observed, the tragedy of ancient Greece, with all its circumstances of inveterate hatred, unjust ambition, and atrocious retaliation, though with less consummate actors upon the scene. The Milanese, who were, at no very distant period, themselves to taste of the dregs of misery, were unrelenting oppressors of the smaller republics, at the opening of the twelfth century.

1111 After a war of four years they took the city of Lodi by assault, razed it to the ground, and, distributing the surviving inhabitants into six open villages, exercised over them a galling and cruel tyranny. Seven years afterwards they commenced a more difficult war with the little city of Como, the siege of which, repeated during ten successive summers, terminated, after an heroic resistance on the part of the inhabitants, in their subjection

1128 though on lenient terms to the conquering republic. But though Milan was odiously pre-eminent in her career of tyranny, others of the more powerful republics were not free from the same reproach. Cremona, in the last year of the eleventh century, attacked and subjugated the city of Crema; and Pavia, some years later, was successful in the work of oppression against Tortona. These and other tyrannical enterprizes had filled all Lombardy with various animosities and implacable hatreds. At the period when the emperor

1125 Henry V. closed his life, shortly after the peace of Worms, most of the Lombard cities were

leagued with Milan in the war against the independence of Como; but, in the year following the surrender of that town, the attempt of Crema to throw off the Cremonese yoke had separated Lombardy into two great factions, or leagues, of nearly equal forces. Milan, into whose arms 1129
Crema had thrown herself, extended protection to that little state, and was supported by several republics; while Pavia, Placentia, Novara, and Brescia were arrayed on the other side as the allies of Cremona. *

The local causes of contention between these well-balanced powers were swallowed up in the disputes which arose for the succession to the empire, on the death of Henry V. who left no children to inherit his dignity. Germany was divided between the rival pretensions of the houses of Saxony and Swabia. Lothaire, duke of Saxony, was proclaimed emperor by the German 1125
diet; but the two brothers of the house of Swabia, nephews of Henry V., opposed their claims to his elevation; and one of them, Conrad, duke of Franconia, assuming the royal title, passed into 1128
Italy, and, with the support of the Milanese, received the crown of Lombardy in their city. But his power was unequal to his ambition; and, when Lothaire entered Italy in his turn, with so 1132
feeble an army that he excited the ridicule of the

Death of the emperor Henry V.—Disputed succession to the empire.

* Muratori Annali, A. D. 1100—1129. and Antiq. Ital. Dissert. 45 and 46. Hallam, vol. i. pp. 343—345, &c. Sismondi, vol. i. pp. 365—408. and vol. ii. pp. 1—20.

CHAP. II. PART I.

Italians, Conrad was obliged to retire into Germany with humiliation, before even his scanty array. Lothaire received the imperial crown at Rome from Honorius II. by whom he was supported; but, contrary to the established custom, his coronation took place in the church of St. John, in the Lateran, for an anti-pope ruled in the Vatican; and the new emperor, after the ceremony, hastily abandoned Rome and Italy.

State of the papacy.

There is no circumstance more striking in the history of the popedom than the alternations of weakness and strength which its annals exhibit. When circumstances favored the pretensions of papal arrogance, or when the tiara graced the brows of a master spirit, we are certain to find new assumptions of authority, and fresh advances successfully established towards ecclesiastical dominion over the universe: when schisms disturbed the church, or men of weak character filled the chair of St. Peter, we are astonished at the decline of pontifical rule. But these powerless intervals were moments of slumber not of decay; and, when the talents of the reigning pope or the progress of events admitted the developement of papal ambition, we invariably discover that the energies of the church have merely been dormant, and that they have not retrograded from the highest point that they had formerly gained. On the death of Paschal II. who, with his predecessor, had emulated the pride and prosecuted the views of Gregory VII., the hostile influence of two powerful Roman fa-

milies in the conclave of cardinals produced double elections, and a long and scandalous schism in the papacy. The citizens of Rome availed themselves of the disorders of the times to re-establish their republican independence and their importance, which the vigorous reign of Gregory and his successors had formerly destroyed. In their opposition to the popes they were instigated by the exhortations of a republican monk, Arnold of Brescia, who, with a singular spirit for one of his order, devoted his remarkable eloquence and the weight of irreproachable morals and orthodox faith to expose the vices of the clergy. Whatever were his motives, he satisfied the conviction of his hearers when he inveighed against the dangerous consequences of the union of temporal and ecclesiastical power in the popedom. The Roman republic was restored under his direction; the popes were compelled to recognize its authority; and Arnold of Brescia, after suffering persecution and exile, became the real master of Rome. 1145

Arnold of Brescia.

After the first expedition of the emperor Lothaire into Italy, several years elapsed before he again crossed the Alps. In this interval his rival, Conrad, though he had received the crown of Lombardy, submitted to his authority; and Lothaire at length descended into Italy again with a more respectable force than had formerly accompanied him. His presence had a momentary influence upon the affairs of the church and of Naples, but scarcely any upon the general aspect 1136

Reigns of the emperors Lothaire 1125—1137

CHAP. II. PART I.

of Italy. He died, after a short and glorious campaign, on his return to Germany; and was succeeded, in the following year, by Conrad III., the same prince who had formerly contended with him for the imperial crown; and whose reign of fourteen years is altogether unconnected with Italian history, since, during the whole of the period, he neither appeared in the kingdom nor exercised the slightest influence over its affairs. He left an infant son; but the German diet, setting aside the claims of the minor by the advice of the dying emperor himself, elected for his successor his nephew, Frederic Barbarossa, duke of Swabia, then in the flower of his age, and the most powerful prince of Germany. Equally allied to the two princely families whose rivalry had long distracted Germany, Frederic concentrated in his person the conflicting affections and interests of their factions, and wielded the whole feudal strength of the kingdom. His elevation to the throne of Germany introduced a new æra of splendour and power for the imperial dignity; but it also opens the most glorious and interesting epoch in the chequered story of Italian independence.

1137 and Conrad III. 1138—1152

Accession of Frederic Barbarossa to the imperial crown. 1152

His character and ambitions designs.

In Frederic Barbarossa the Italians were destined to find a very different sovereign from their last emperors, who had rarely appeared in Italy, and with forces quite inadequate to the maintenance of their authority. The talents of Frederic were of the highest order, and he was active, enterprising, and valiant; but these fa-

vorable qualities were disgraced by a severe and arbitrary temper, a systematic inflexible cruelty, and a haughty conceit that his imperial rights entitled him, as the successor of Augustus, to the despotic dominion of the earth. The conqueror and the tyrant have never wanted their apologists among men who are dazzled by the vanity of warlike renown and awed by the contemplation of stupendous power; but, to the calm eye of philosophy, the character of Frederic Barbarossa, as of all who, like him, have harassed nations and outraged humanity, will appear only as a fitting object for the unmingled detestation of mankind. Covetous of power, greedy of military glory, and enjoying the undivided obedience of numerous and warlike nobles, Frederic looked upon Italy as a fair field for his grasping ambition and formidable array. Immediately after his accession he summoned all the vassals of the German crown to be in readiness, within two years, to attend him on an expedition into Italy; and he concluded an alliance with pope Eugene II. who promised to place the imperial crown on his head, and whom in return he undertook to deliver from the thraldom of the Roman republic.

But it was towards the free communities of Lombardy that the impatience and resentment of Frederic were most strongly directed. To his absolute pretensions, the independence of those cities was mere rebellion which it behoved him to crush, their successful efforts to govern themselves, an intolerable usurpation of the rights of

CHAP. II. PART I.

his crown, which his dignity required him to uphold. In this temper he unhappily found too much reason, in the conduct of some of the Lombard cities towards each other, for his interference and common oppression of them all. Forty-two years had now elapsed since the Milanese had completed the destruction of Lodi, and scattered its citizens into villages; the generation of the conquerors and of the oppressed had alike passed away, and liberty might be known only to the sons of the Lodese by the lamentations of their parents. But the spirit of a free people is an undying inheritance; and the inhabitants of Lodi had continued to cherish in their defenceless villages the fond memory of ruined independence, and the bitter sense of present humiliation.

1153 Two of them happening accidentally to be at Constance when Frederic held a diet there, in the year after his accession, threw themselves at the feet of the emperor, and implored him, as the ultimate source of justice, to redress the wrongs of their country. The designs of Frederic sufficiently disposed him to lend a favorable ear to their prayer; and he immediately dispatched an order to the Milanese to re-establish the people of Lodi in their ancient privileges, and to renounce the jurisdiction over them which they had arrogated to themselves. But such was the terror inspired by the Milanese power, that, when the imperial messenger arrived in Italy, the magistrates of Lodi disclaimed the complaints of their countrymen; and the people were overwhelmed

by a horrible dread of summary vengeance from the formidable republic, against which the remote assistance of Frederic appeared no protection. By the Milanese themselves the order to set the people of Lodi at liberty was received with violent indignation and contempt; and the imperial envoy escaped with difficulty from the fury of the populace. But the consuls of Milan, learning the approaching entrance of the emperor into Italy, were unwilling to provoke his anger by any attack upon the people of Lodi; and they even, with the other Lombard cities, sent to him the presents which it was customary to offer on the accession of a new sovereign.

Entrance of Frederic into Italy. 1154

Meanwhile Frederic, passing the Alps, entered Italy through the Trentine valley at the head of all his German vassals, and with a more brilliant and powerful army than any of his predecessors had ever led into Lombardy. Advancing to the neighbourhood of Placentia, he opened the ancient feudal assembly of the states of the kingdom on the plain of Roncaglia, on the Po. Here complaints of the ambition of Milan poured in from various quarters. The consuls of Lodi now repeated the supplications which they had formerly disavowed; those of Como had similar intreaties to prefer for protection against the Milanese tyranny; and the deputies of Pavia, Cremona, and Novara, from inveterate hatred to Milan, were ranged in support of the same cause. But the consuls of Milan were ready to reply to the charges of their enemies, and they were seconded

36337

CHAP. II. PART I.

in the angry discussion which was carried on before the emperor, by the delegates of Crema, Brescia, Tortona, Placentia, and other cities.

He attacks the republic of Milan.

The party of Pavia was evidently the weaker; and the insidious policy of Frederic, therefore, impelled him to throw his sword into their scale. Milan stood in no need of his aid; but she once subdued, her opponents were too feeble to withstand him. He at first, however, dissembled, and commanded both the leagues, who had already commenced desultory hostilities, to lay down their arms and await his decision at Novara. Breaking up the diet, he began his march through the Milanese territory towards that place; and, making it a cause of offence against the consuls of the republic who conducted him on his route that the supply of provisions was insufficient for his wasteful army, he rejected all their submissive efforts to avert his displeasure, and gave over the country to fire and rapine. The people of Milan now saw that the tyrant was inexorable; and they began to prepare for a vigorous resistance. They strengthened the works of their capital, collected supplies, and confirmed their alliance with the cities of their party. The storm soon burst upon the confederacy. Frederic, after passing into the territory of Turin and Vercelli, and receiving those cities, though they governed themselves as republics, into his favor, returned towards Pavia, and on his march satiated his vengeance against the city of Asti and the little town of Chieri, which had dared to espouse the

cause of independence. Their citizens, distrusting the strength of their defences, fled at his approach; and Frederic, reducing their deserted habitations to ashes, drew near to Tortona, and ordered that republic to renounce the alliance of Milan for that of Pavia. But the magistrates of this little state replied with a noble spirit that they were not used to desert their allies in the hour of adversity: and the numerous army of Frederic sat down before their walls.

Siege of Tortona. 1155

The lower part of the city was little susceptible of defence, and the emperor soon made himself master of it; but the upper town, elevated on a rocky hill, was strong by situation and art. The Milanese threw two hundred of their best citizens into the place, induced some of the rural nobility of Liguria to share in the defence, and for two months enabled the people of Tortona, with these aids, to defy the imperial power. The emperor pressed the siege with skill and obstinacy; and his machines—the balistæ of the ancients—threw such masses of rock into the city, that upon one occasion three of the principal inhabitants were buried under the fall of a single piece. But despair lent incredible strength to the besieged: their engineers countermined the subterranean approaches of the assailants under the only tower which was not placed on a rock, and suffocated the enemy in their own galleries; the sallies of the citizens were frequent and terrible; and Frederic vainly endeavoured to awe them into surrender by erecting gibbets before the walls,

CHAP. II. PART I.

and, with execrable barbarity, hanging the few prisoners who fell into his hands in the defence of their liberties. The horrors of thirst at last accomplished that which the sword could not effect: the besiegers succeeded in poisoning with sulphur the only fountain—it was without the walls—to which the sallies of the heroic burghers could afford them access; and, after sixty-two days of incessant combats, they capitulated for their lives and personal freedom. Their town was razed to the ground, and the citizens of Milan afforded them an hospitable refuge.

Coronation of Frederic at Pavia,

After this victory, Frederic made his triumphal entry into Pavia, and there received the crown of Lombardy. But, instead of pursuing his success against Milan, his ambition was dazzled by the desire of wearing his imperial crown; and he marched towards Rome to accept it from pope Adrian IV. who, on the death of Eugene III. and after the short reign of his successor, Anastasius IV., had ascended the papal chair. Barbarossa carried into Rome his hatred of popular liberty; the citizens trembled before his sword; and their eloquent adviser, Arnold of Brescia, was betrayed into his hands. Frederic consigned the unhappy monk to the inhuman vengeance of the pope, and he was burnt alive at Rome, by the sentence of a council which had unjustly condemned him for heresy. After this tragedy, the pope and the emperor met to cement their blood-stained alliance; and such was now the measure of pontifical arrogance, that Adrian obliged the haughty em-

peror to hold his stirrup, while he descended from his mule, before he would bestow upon him the kiss of peace. After receiving the imperial diadem, and punishing the Romans for a popular insurrection, Frederic was compelled to disband the greatest part of his army at Ancona, for his German vassals were impatient to return by different routes to their country; and, with his remaining followers, traversing Romagna, and the Mantuan and Veronese territory, he himself re-entered Germany by Trent and Balzano, after an absence of one year.

and at Rome.

Continued hostilities between the emperor and the Milanese.

The army of Frederic had no sooner quitted Lombardy for Rome, than the Milanese rebuilt Tortona at their own expence, and by the voluntary labour of their citizens. They then, taking advantage of the emperor's return to Germany, proceeded to punish those who, equally interested with themselves in the liberties of Italy, had made common cause with the foreign oppressor. They 1157
defeated the people of Pavia and Novara, and the marquis of Montferrat; and, by their successes, completely re-established the reputation of their arms. With less justifiable violence they expelled the injured citizens of Lodi from their dwellings; they strengthened their own walls and rural castles; they formed closer relations of mutual defence with their allies; and Frederic soon learnt that his presence in Italy could alone prevent the whole of Lombardy from being drawn into a confederacy against him. He convoked all the German vassals of the empire for a second expedition

CHAP. II. PART I.

1158

beyond the Alps; and, after an absence of two years, descended from the mountains again with the flower of the German nobility and an immense army. When his numbers were augmented by the feudal array of the Italian nobles and the contingents of the cities, almost all of whom contributed their militia, either willingly or from the terror of his overwhelming force, he had assembled fifteen thousand cavalry and one hundred thousand infantry.

Blockade and submission of Milan.

The whole of this mighty power was directed against Milan, and the people of that city prepared with resolution for the siege which awaited them. The circuit of their walls was immense, a broad and deep fosse swept round the bulwarks, and Frederic found that to attack them with the battering ram and moveable tower would be in vain. Against the numerous inhabitants famine might be rendered more effectual than these engines of destruction. The Milanese, in the expectation that the emperor would not be able to complete the investment of so great a city on all sides, had neglected to lay in sufficient supplies; and when Frederic, by the skilful disposition of his blockade, had disappointed their hopes and repulsed their sallies, the immense population became a prey first to hunger, and then to disease and despair. They yielded to want and pestilence rather than to the arms of Frederic, and obtained favorable conditions. They were compelled to renounce their authority over the people of Como and Lodi, to build a palace for the

emperor, to pay him a large ransom, and to abjure their regalian rights: but the possession of their territory was confirmed to them, their allies were included in the capitulation, they were allowed to maintain their confederacy and to choose their own consuls, and the imperial army was restricted from entering their walls.

Arbitrary conduct of Frederic.

These terms were not in themselves under all circumstances severe; but it was soon perceived how much faith might be placed upon their observance. In a diet which Frederic held at Roncaglia, after the capitulation of Milan, the nobles and the clergy of Italy vied with each other in exalting the imperial prerogatives; the jurisconsults of Bologna, where the civil law was now studied, lent him all the aid of the despotic principles which they could deduce from the codes of Justinian; and the rights of the empire were so defined as utterly to destroy the independence of the cities. These regalian rights, as they were termed, were held to belong to the emperors alone, from whom they had been gradually usurped; and, instead of the general supremacy, with the enjoyment of supplies of provision whenever the sovereign entered Italy, which the cities had always conceded to the imperial authority, the absolute possession of all the revenues and appurtenances of government was now grasped by its prerogative, and only remitted for a pecuniary stipulation. A more intolerable innovation was next introduced: an imperial magistrate, with the title, which afterwards became famous in

CHAP. II. PART I.

Italian history, of podestá, was placed in each city, ostensibly to execute justice in appeals to the imperial authority, but in reality to overawe the republican consuls. Frederic soon proceeded farther; and, abolishing altogether the popular magistracies, threw the whole judicial power into the hands of his own officers.

Revolt of the Milanese. 1159

It was this last outrage which stung the people of Milan to madness. The faithless tyrant had already violated the terms of his treaty with them, seized part of their territory, robbed them of their proper jurisdiction, subjected their allies; and they now resolved rather to make one desperate struggle for independence than tamely to witness the gradual and total subversion of their freedom. After the submission of Milan and on the approach of winter, many of the great German feudatories had returned to their homes, and Frederic had led the remainder of his followers into Romagna, to establish the imperial pretensions over its cities and fiefs. Circumstances, therefore, favored the Milanese: they rose in arms, and Frederic, too weak at the moment to form the siege of their city, contented himself with putting them under the ban of the empire. But Lombardy was prostrate in subjection; only the Brescians and the little state of Crema dared to share the fortunes of Milan; and Frederic, reinforced from Germany, and supported by the cities inimical to Milan, was every where successful. He invested Crema, and took it by capitulation, after an obstinate defence of six months,

Siege of Crema.

which recalled many of the circumstances of the siege of Tortona, with even more atrocious cruelty on the part of Frederic; for he exposed his hostages and prisoners to the darts of their besieged friends, by fastening their bodies on the exterior of the moveable towers which he directed against the walls.

Notwithstanding the fate of Crema, the Milanese maintained their struggle for independence with unshaken courage; and for two years they successfully resisted all the efforts of their haughty adversary. At first the force of Frederic was weakened by the necessity of disbanding his army, as his vassals were as usual soon tired of service and anxious to revisit their country; and the contest was then reduced so nearly to a parity of strength that the Milanese fought a ranged battle against him at Cassano with signal success. Advancing with deliberate firmness to the attack with their carroccio, they utterly routed one wing of the imperialists, and though, in the other quarter of the field, the personal bravery of Frederic broke through all obstacles so that the sacred car fell for a moment into his hands and its standard was torn down, a second charge of the republicans obtained the victory and compelled Frederic to abandon the field. This and other partial successes buoyed up the hopes of the Milanese. But when, after the first year, the emperor was again joined by a fresh feudal army of Germans, their cause wore a different aspect, and grew daily more desperate. Their harvests were

Battle of Cassano. 1160

CHAP. II. PART I.

utterly destroyed, their plains were devastated; and, while a hundred thousand men blockaded their city, a calamitous fire which broke out within the walls destroyed their granaries and left them without food in the depth of winter. Harassed with perpetual fatigues, worn out by famine, by reverses, and by despair, the wretched citizens were finally reduced to surrender at discretion. The victor at first preserved a sullen silence on the fate which he intended for them, and excited deceitful hopes by a delay of three weeks in the expression of his pleasure. But at length the people of Milan were commanded to quit their habitations and to retire beyond the circuit of their walls, they obeyed with trembling submission, and Milan was a solitude. The imperialists then entered the deserted streets; the citizens of Pavia and Cremona, of Lodi and Como, were ordered to glut their hatred of Milan in the respective quarters of the city which were allotted to them; and for six days they laboured with malignant industry in levelling the ramparts and houses with the ground. On the seventh the vengeance of Barbarossa had been accomplished: Milan was a pile of ruins, and her children were scattered in misery and servitude over their plains.

Second blockade,

and destruction of Milan. 1162

The destruction of Milan appeared to consummate the grandeur of the imperial dominion. No power remained to oppose the despotic pretensions of Frederic: the liberties of Lombardy were completely overthrown, and the tyrant

Subsequent tyranny of Frederic over the cities of Lombardy.

casting off the mask, and abandoning himself to the indulgence of his arbitrary temper, alike subjected his faithful adherents, and the states which he had crushed, to a merciless and onerous yoke. Even in many of the cities which had assisted him, he abolished the republican magistracy and substituted his podestá; his officers every where exercised the most despotic authority and extorted immense contributions; and the unhappy Milanese in particular, in the villages into which they had been distributed, were the victims of intolerable exactions and tyranny. The imperial lieutenant, the archbishop elect of Cologne, who governed in Italy on Frederic's return to Germany, emulated the disposition of his master, and ruled over Lombardy with a sceptre of iron. We are assured that under his authority the podestás raised the contributions of their cities to six times the amount which had ever before been demanded of them. It was without effect that, on the entrance of Frederic into Italy in the following year, the Italians carried their remonstrances and supplications to the foot of his throne. They were received with indiscriminate displeasure, or heard only to be met by empty promises of inquiry into the conduct of ministers who had acted with a spirit so congenial to his own. But the fire of liberty had not been utterly extinguished in Lombardy. The cruel internal animosities, the dark and vindictive hatreds which had convulsed the bosom of Italian society were calmed by the general misery, and converted

1162

CHAP. II. PART I.

into indignation and shame by the common degradation of states which had once been free. A salutary but too transient oblivion of former jealousies was produced by detestation of the universal tyrant; and, with the single exception of Pavia, the cities of Lombardy were animated by an unconquerable resolution to recover that independence which all had lost either by violence or treachery.

Resistance of the cities,

The cities of the Veronese March, hitherto almost strangers to the wars of Lombardy, were the first to confederate, and their success gave a

1164

happy promise to their compatriots, for Frederic was repulsed from their district, and compelled to seek reinforcements in Germany: upon the militia of his subject cities he dared not rely. His absence, and the subsequent employment which was given to his arms in central Italy, by his support of an anti-pope against Alexander III. (the successor of Adrian IV.) and the king of Sicily, afforded opportunities for Verona and the confederate cities of eastern Lombardy to spread their coalition. Cremona, formerly the faithful ally of the emperor, Brescia, and other towns joined their cause; the people of Milan were taken under their protection; and the first act of the new alliance was to rebuild the walls of the ruined city and collect its natives within them from their defenceless villages. Milan revived as a powerful republic, Lodi was compelled to join the insurrection, and the two clusters of cities on the east and west of the Adige united in the famous Lom-

and general league against Frederic.

1167

Rebuilding of Milan.

BARD LEAGUE. An obligation of mutual assistance for twenty years, the recovery of their elective magistracies, and of their rights of peace and war, and the restoration of all the regalian privileges which had been extorted from them at the diet of Roncaglia, were the condition and the objects of the league.

It was cemented at a fortunate crisis. The emperor had imprudently embroiled himself with the church and the king of Sicily, by his ineffectual attempts to oppose a rival to Alexander III. On leading a new army into Italy he suspended the punishment which he intended for the Lombards, to conduct his force against Rome, where the citizens had declared for Alexander. He vigorously pushed the siege of that city, but the hour of retribution for a life of execrable ambition had at length arrived. His great army fell a prey to the autumnal fever of the *maremma,* which visits 1167
the vicinity of that city, the flower of his German nobility was cut off by the ravages of this pestilence,* and he was compelled to abandon his

* The effects of Italian climate in all these wars were extremely fatal to the Germans, and probably much aggravated by the habits of intemperance which distinguished that people. Whole armies were swept away by pestilential disease, and the survivors usually terminated their expedition by re-crossing the Alps with the bones of their princes and nobles. "The cauldron," says Gibbon, on the authority of Schmidt (Histoire des Allemands), "used for the purpose of boiling away the bones from the corpse, was a necessary piece of travelling furniture; and a German who was using it for his brother, promised it to a friend, after it should have been employed for himself."

CHAP. II. PART I.

enterprize and to continue a disgraceful retreat to the Alps.

Prosecution of the war between the emperor and the Lombard league. 1174—76

Six years had passed before Frederic could again lead his forces into Italy; and two years more, in which he sacrificed another army to the murderous influence of climate, were consumed in indecisive hostilities with the Lombard league, before his unbending spirit would receive the lessons of misfortune and chastisement. At length was fought that memorable battle, which was to confirm the independence of Lombardy and to put the finishing stroke to the humiliation of her oppressor.

Battle of Legnano. 1176

It was in the spring of the year 1176 that Frederic, having received large reinforcements from Germany, and collected all the troops which he could previously bring into the field, advanced for the last time into the territory of Milan, at the head of a formidable army. The Milanese on their part had not neglected to avail themselves of the cessation of hostilities during the winter, to prepare for the struggle of the campaign. They had formed two bodies of chosen cavalry; the one a devoted band of nine hundred men, who had sworn to die for their country rather than to yield ground to the enemy; the other of three hundred youths of the first families of the republic, who were bound by a similar oath to the defence of the sacred carroccio. The rest of the citizens were divided into six great masses of infantry under the banners of their several quarters in the city. When intelligence was received of

the approach of Frederic, the republic had not yet received the expected succours from all her confederates. The militia of Placentia, with a handful of the chosen troops of Verona, Brescia, Vercelli, and Novara, were the only allied force which had effected their junction. But the Milanese boldly led out the carroccio from their gates, and advanced to encounter the imperial army on the plain of Legnano, within less than fifteen miles of their capital. As the two armies approached, a skirmish of cavalry soon brought on a general engagement; and the German chivalry, led by the emperor in person, made a furious charge upon the carroccio. As they came on at the gallop, the Milanese threw themselves on their knees, commended the purity of their sacred cause to God, St. Peter, and St. Ambrose,* and then, rising and unfurling their banners, bravely advanced to meet the assailants. But so impetuous and tremendous was the onset of the German chivalry, that the chosen guard of the carroccio was borne down before them and broken by the weight of the shock, and the sacred car itself, as its defenders wavered, became in imminent peril. At that moment of trial, the devoted squadron of the Milanese raised their voices to heaven with the solemn and enthusiastic repetition of their vow to conquer or perish; threw themselves with resistless desperation upon the

* Ambrose, an archbishop of Milan, had been canonized, and was considered as the patron saint of his see.

CHAP. II. PART I.

enemy, and decided the glorious fortunes of their country. The imperial standard was trampled in the dust, and Frederic, who fought with a courage worthy of a better cause, in the foremost ranks of his nobles, was thrown from his horse. The column which his example had animated fled on his fall, and the Milanese infantry steadily advancing, the rout in the imperial army soon became general. The swords of the Milanese were dyed with a terrific vengeance. For eight miles the plain was covered with the slaughter of the fugitives; and, of those among them who escaped the pursuit, the greater number were drowned in the waters of the Tesino.

Establishment of the independence of Lombardy.

Frederic had not been killed as was supposed for some time by his followers, but, after being several days missing, he appeared at Pavia alone, humiliated, and in the disguise in which he had contrived to escape after the battle. Two and twenty years had elapsed since his first expedition into Italy; and during that time, in the vain struggle against freedom, he had led seven great armies to their destruction by pestilence or the sword: he had shed torrents of blood, razed cities to their foundations, and sickened humanity with his atrocities. Yet so precarious is power when raised on injustice and oppression, so unextinguishable the spirit and so elastic the courage which can animate a people in the cause of independence, that, in the zenith of his greatness, and when he appeared most completely to have succeeded in the establishment of despotism,

Frederic was plunged by his insatiable ambition and relentless temper from one misfortune into another; defied, baffled, and ignominiously put to flight by the people on whose necks he had fixed the yoke, and whose heart-rending supplications for mercy he had sternly and inexorably resisted.

After the battle of Legnano, Frederic could scarcely hope to raise a fresh army, still less to succeed in his pretensions against the free cities of Lombardy. His mortified pride still rendered him unwilling to acknowledge their independence, but he opened negociations with pope Alexander III. and was reconciled to the church; and he was then persuaded by the mediation of the Venetian republic to consent to a truce for six years with the cities of Lombardy, the stipulations of which were all favorable to the league. During its continuance the emperor won over Cremona and other cities to his party, an unhappy proof of reviving animosities between the Italian states; but at its expiration the anxiety of Frederic to associate his son with him in his crowns of Germany and Italy, to which the renewal of hostilities would have presented serious obstacles, induced him to sacrifice his pride, and to conclude at Constance a final pacification with the Lombard republics. By this memorable treaty he consented to all that those states had contended for. The general supremacy which they had never denied to the imperial authority, and the customary tribute of provisions during the empe-

Peace of Constance. 1183

CHAP. II. PART I.

ror's residence in Italy, were freely preserved: but the election of magistrates, the power of levying war and raising fortresses, all the regalian rights to which the republics had ever laid claim, were solemnly confirmed to them, and the real independence of Lombardy was triumphantly effected. *

* Muratori, A.D. 1125— 1183. Sismondi, vol. ii. pp. 20—233. Hallam, vol. i. pp. 346—357.

PART II.

SOUTHERN ITALY—*State of the Greek and Lombard Possessions in the tenth Century—The Normans—First Appearance of their Pilgrims in Italy—Their Exploits and Settlement at Aversa, near Naples, and Conquest of Apulia—War of Pope Leo IX. against the Normans—His Defeat and Captivity—Robert Guiscard duke of Apulia and Calabria—Norman Conquest of Sicily—Roger I. Great Count of Sicily—Successors of Robert Guiscard—Extinction of the direct Line of his Family—Roger II. Great Count of Sicily and Duke of Calabria and Apulia—Subjugation of the Campanian Republics—Ruin of Amalfi—Submission of Gaeta and Naples—Roger II. King of the Two Sicilies by papal Investiture—His Death—William I. the Bad, and William II. the Good, Kings of the Sicilies*—REPUBLICS OF VENICE, PISA, AND GENOA—*General Advance of the Power and Wealth of Venice—Acquisition of Dalmatia by the Republic—Changes in the Venetian Constitution—Establishment of the great Council, and of the little Council and Senate—Severe Restrictions on the Powers of the Doges—Form of ducal Elections—Pisa—Her early Commerce and Enterprizes—Her Conquest of Sardinia and the Balearic Isles—Genoa—Connection of her early History with that of Pisa—Her Conquest of Corsica—Constitution of the Pisan and Genoese Republics—Furious Wars between the two States—Part taken by Venice, Pisa, and Genoa in the Crusades—Consequent Wealth of these Republics.*

WHEN the first Otho raised himself to the imperial throne, the greater part of southern Italy was still possessed, as we have seen it seventy years before, by the Greeks, under their provincial governor at Bari. The free republics of Naples, Gaeta, and

CHAP. II. PART II. SOUTHERN ITALY. 961—1183

State of the Greek and Lombard possessions in the tenth century.

Amalfi, flourished in untarnished independence: but the great Lombard duchy of Benevento, broken up into lesser principalities, had fallen from its ancient splendour, and declined in energy and strength. Otho the Great determined to subject alike the Greeks and the Lombards to his Italian crown: but the efforts of a long war were unavailing, and the contest was terminated by a treaty of marriage between the son of Otho and the daughter of an

970 eastern emperor.

Otho II. renewed the pretensions of his father to the sovereignty of southern Italy; and his alliance with the imperial line of Constantinople was an additional pretext for claiming the Greek province as the dower of his empress. But the eastern emperors resisted his demand, and Otho led a powerful army towards the south to enforce their acquiescence. Pandolph of the Iron Head, one of the Lombard princes, had succeeded at this epoch in re-uniting the duchy of Benevento under a single chief, and Otho was fortified by his alliance. The Greeks, trembling at the approach of Otho, hired the services of a body of Saracens from Sicily; and, with the aid of these enemies of their faith, ventured to encounter the emperor at

983 Basantello, in Calabria. The first attack of the Germans was vigorous, and put the pusillanimous Greeks to flight; but their musulman auxiliaries, who formed their reserve, threw themselves in unbroken order upon the conquerors, at the moment when the latter had lost their ranks in the ardour of pursuit, and reversed the fate of the

day. The infidels made a frightful massacre, in which Pandolph lost his life, and the emperor escaped with difficulty from their hands. He, however, died shortly after this unfortunate expedition; and the Greek province, with Naples and its sister republics, was secured by the long minority of his son from farther attacks. The death of Pandolph, too, had been followed by the partition of the Beneventine duchy into numerous petty principalities; and the weakness of their chieftains enabled the Greeks to extend the limits of their Italian possessions.

From this period to the middle of the eleventh century the history of southern Italy is enveloped in obscurity and confusion, perplexed with endless petty wars and revolutions, and tinged with the fabulous exaggeration of romantic and almost incredible achievements. Divided between the Lombard chieftains, the maritime republics, and the Greeks—who, after the display of some exertion, but without real strength, had relapsed into weakness and sloth—the south of Italy was delivered over to all sorts of internal disorders, and became an unresisting prey to the Saracen corsairs of Sicily. But a singular revolution put a period both to these devastating inroads and to the dominion of the Greeks and Lombards. The Normans, a famous piratical people of Scandinavia, after inflicting dreadful ravages on the coasts of Europe, had, in the first part of the tenth century, permanently established themselves in the French province which has ever since been named after

The Normans.

CHAP. II. PART II. SOUTHERN ITALY. 961—1183

them. Reposing in their new dominions from the wanderings and rapine of a life of piracy, they embraced Christianity, and carried into their devotion to a new faith all their ancient ardour for strange and perilous enterprizes. The pious duty of visiting the shrines of saints and martyrs, and, above all, of kneeling on the sacred places of Palestine, recommended itself to them as gratifying their spirit of curiosity and passion for adventure. Traversing France and Italy to embark on the Mediterranean for the Holy Land, the Norman pilgrims, in small but well-armed companies, were prepared, on their toilsome and dangerous route, either to crave hospitality in the blessed name of the cross, or to force their way at the point of the lance.

First appearance of their pilgrims in Italy.

In one of the first years of the eleventh century about forty of these martial devotees were at Salerno, on their return from the holy sepulchre, when that city was insulted by a fleet of the Sicilian Saracens, with an imperious demand for contributions. The Lombards, who, under the enervating influence of a delicious climate, had utterly lost the courage of their forefathers, would basely have yielded to the summons; but the handful of Norman pilgrims, in astonishment at their cowardice, intrepidly sallied from the gates of Salerno, charged the infidels, and so inspired the degenerate inhabitants by their example, that the invaders were driven to their vessels with immense slaughter. This achievement introduced into Italy the reputation of the Norman prowess; the pil-

Their exploits,

grims, on their return home, inflamed the enterprizing spirit and the cupidity of their countrymen by reports of the fertility of these southern regions, and the effeminacy of its possessors; and new adventurers were attracted to the rich and promising field which opened to their ambition. A knight, named Drengot, was the first to emigrate from Normandy with his family and retainers; and, on the arrival of his band in Apulia, they found immediate employment in the domestic quarrels of the Greeks. Their first success, however, was indifferent; but they passed into the service of the Lombard princes of Salerno and Capua, their strength was yearly increased by new swarms of soldiers and pilgrims, and their swords obtained for them a settlement at Aversa, near Naples, which the gratitude of that republic, for their services against a prince of Capua, afterwards raised into a permanent fief, under count Rainulf, the surviving brother of Drengot.

and settlement at Aversa, near Naples. 1029

The next remarkable exploit of the Normans was in the service of the Greeks. In one of those moments of transient energy which relieve the sluggish annals of the eastern empire, the catapan Maniaces led an expedition from his province to attempt the conquest of Sicily from the Saracens. He took into his pay on this occasion three hundred Norman cavaliers, of whom the commanders, or at least the most distinguished knights, were the three eldest sons of a Norman châtelain, Tancred of Hauteville. Aspiring above the narrow fortunes of their house, they had arrived in

Their services to the Greeks.

CHAP. II. PART II. SOUTHERN ITALY. 961—1183

Italy to share in the enterprizes of their countrymen; and of their nine brothers seven, encouraged by their example and sharing in their spirit, successively quitted the paternal castle for the same destination, leaving the other two to guard their father's age and perpetuate his race.

The valour of the Normans at first signally promoted the success of Maniaces in his Sicilian expedition; and, aided by their intrepidity, he made considerable conquests in the island. But he rewarded their splendid services with injustice and ingratitude, and denied them their share of the spoil. The fearless and avaricious adventurers were by no means of a temper to bear with injurious treatment; but they dissembled their resentment until they could, without suspicion, repass the straits, and join their brethren at Aversa, who shared in their indignation. There, in concert with count Rainulf and his followers, they formed the audacious resolution of revenging themselves upon the Greeks, by the conquest of their possessions on the Italian continent. With the aid of Rainulf they could muster no more than seven hundred horse and five hundred foot; and it may seem incredible that the overthrow of the Greek power, in a great province, should have been attempted and achieved by their insignificant numbers. But the orientals were cowardly and inactive, and their dissensions increased the superiority of the northern hardihood and prudence.

Quarrel with them, 1041

and conquest of Apulia, 1042

The Normans gained, in succession, three great victories, and speedily subdued Apulia, and divided

its possession amongst twelve counts, whose fiefs formed a feudal republic.

In these new demesnes the Norman counts bestowed a general supremacy upon one of their number, William of the Iron Arm, the eldest of the brothers of Hauteville. But the authority of this renowned warrior was little more than nominal; the counts pursued a career of rapine and violence; and even the shrines and convents, which had received the devotions of the Norman pilgrims, were now violated by their spoliations. Their excesses and tyranny excited general indignation, and pope Leo IX. formed an enterprize for the punishment of their sacrilege and the destruction of their power. The emperor Henry III. lent him some German cavalry, the Lombards and Greeks joined the cause of religion, and the pope imprudently forsook his sacred character to lead a numerous but undisciplined host. The Normans undauntedly faced the storm. William of the Iron Arm and his next brother were dead; but Humphrey, the third, was their worthy successor in the supreme command. Robert Guiscard, too, the fourth of their house, had now arrived from Normandy with a reinforcement of adventurers; and the count of Aversa joined his countrymen in their common danger. In the battle of Civitella the pope was completely defeated, and fell into the hands of enemies who, instead of triumphing in their victory, prostrated themselves in the dust before him, and implored his absolution for the guilt of having defended

War of pope Leo IX. against the Normans.

His defeat and captivity. 1053

CHAP. II. PART II. SOUTHERN ITALY. 961—1183

themselves against him. Leo, a pious and simple-minded ecclesiastic, was penetrated by their submission, and readily extended his pardon to a people at once so devout and so valiant. He was thoroughly reconciled to them, and granted to their prayers the investiture, as a fief of the holy see, not only of the lands which they already possessed, but of such also as they might thenceforward conquer in southern Italy and Sicily.

He invests the Normans with their conquests as a fief of the holy see.

The Normans had now leisure to extend their power. Robert Guiscard, who was pre-eminent in the valour and wisdom of a rude age, undertook the conquest of Calabria; and, on the death of his brother Humphrey, obtained from his com-

1057 peers the election to the headship of Apulia. But his ambition was not yet satisfied: for twenty years he persevered, with scanty numbers, in the scheme of subjugating the dominions both of the Greeks and Lombard princes, and in confirming his authority over his haughty and turbulent Norman barons. These chiefs with difficulty recognized a sovereign in one whom they had known as their equal, and like themselves an adventurer. But Robert triumphed over their jealousies and the weakness of the common enemy. He accomplished the reduction of almost all the country which composes the present kingdom of Naples; and, extinguishing the long dominion of the Beneventine Lombards and of the eastern empire in Italy, finally received from pope Nicholas II. the confirmation of the titles which he had assumed of

Robert Guiscard duke of Apulia and Calabria.

1080 duke of Calabria and Apulia. The republics of

Campania alone preserved a doubtful independence, and compromised for their privileges by electing him as their duke.

Norman conquest of Sicily. 1060—1090

While Robert Guiscard was perfecting his dominion on the continent, his younger brother Roger engaged in the astonishing design of conquering the large and beautiful island of Sicily from the Saracens with a few Norman volunteers. An air of romantic extravagance breathes over all the enterprizes of the Normans in Italy; and, even if we discard the incredible tales which the legends and chronicles of the times have preserved of the valour and corporeal strength of these northern warriors, enough will remain in the authentic results of their expeditions to stagger the reason and warm the imagination with attractive visions of chivalrous achievement. The war against the infidels of Sicily might wear a character of yet greater elevation and heroism than the contest in Italy, by the admixture of religious inspiration, and the more extraordinary disproportion of force. We are assured that three hundred Christian knights were the greatest number which Roger could for many years bring into the field; and that one hundred and thirty-six routed a prodigious host of Saracens at the battle of Ceramio. If we adopt the plausible supposition that each of these knights was attended by five or six followers, who, as was at least afterwards customary, were not included in the muster of noble cavaliers, we shall still be at a loss how to regulate our belief of the Norman

victories. But the Saracens were embroiled in internal discord, and their island was broken up into numerous petty states; we may, therefore, attribute to their dissensions a great part of the success which the chroniclers of the Normans have assigned to their good swords alone. Roger had, however, embarked in an arduous and laborious undertaking, which it required the unbending perseverance and patient valour of thirty years to accomplish. His followers, or rather companions, could not be retained under his standard when the enjoyment of their booty demanded a season of repose, or the caprice of independence tempted to other adventure. But, at length, all Sicily bowed to his sway; Norman barons were infeuded over its surface; and Roger, with the title of great count, held the island as a fief of his brother's duchy.

Roger I. great count of Sicily. 1090

The remainder of the life of Robert Guiscard, after the completion of his conquests in Italy, was passed in the same restless and fiery spirit of enterprize which belonged to his nation and his family. It is not within our purpose to follow him through his expeditions into Greece, which he twice invaded with the magnificent design of overthrowing the eastern empire: his career was splendid, and though his strength was unequal to his views, he defeated the eastern emperor in person at the great battle of Durazzo. Compelled to return to Italy by the affairs of his duchy, Robert supported Gregory VII. against the empire in the struggle for investitures. In

1081

the reverses of his last years, Gregory owed his deliverance from the hands of the emperor Henry IV. to the Norman duke, who advanced to Rome, burnt half the city, raised the siege of the castle of St. Angelo where Gregory had been shut up by the imperialists, and afforded the pope an asylum in his dominions. This was the last exploit of Robert; and he died in the same year, as he was preparing his second expedition against the eastern empire. 1085

Successors of Robert Guiscard in the duchy of Calabria and Apulia. 1085—1127

On the death of Robert, his dominions were disputed between Bohemond his eldest and Roger his second son. Bohemond, born of an obscure marriage which Robert had dissolved in his prosperity, was illegitimized and deprived of his inheritance by his father's testament; but he asserted his right by arms, and a civil war ensued between the brothers, until the first crusade opened new prospects of glory and conquest to Bohemond. Accompanied by his cousin Tancred, the high minded and generous hero of Tasso, he left Italy for ever, and subsequently established in the east the Latin principality of Antioch. The reigns of the immediate descendants of Robert Guiscard—of his son Roger, thus left in peaceful possession of his duchy, and of his grandson William—present no great event to deserve our attention: but, on the death of the latter without children, the extinction of the direct line from Robert Guiscard threw the whole inheritance of the family of Hauteville into the hands of Roger II., the son of the conqueror of

Extinction of the direct line of his family. 1127

CHAP. II. PART II. SOUTHERN ITALY. 961—1183

Sicily, who united the coronet of that isle with the ducal crown of Calabria and Apulia.

Roger II. great count of Sicily and duke of Calabria and Apulia.

The reign of Roger II. is memorable for the total subjugation of the Campanian republics, and for the elevation of the Norman ruler of southern Italy and Sicily to the kingly crown by papal investiture. Whether the courage of the citizens of Amalfi, now the great emporium of eastern merchandize, had declined with the growth of wealth and luxury, or whether the Normans were more formidable enemies than the Lombards, their republic would seem to have exhibited little vigour against the assaults of Roger; who, on their refusal to renounce to him all their privileges, attacked their little state with his whole force and reduced it to subjection. The calamities of two subsequent assaults by foreign enemies were superadded to the Norman oppression. The Pisans, who viewed a commercial rival with jealousy and hatred, sacked Amalfi once while its force was absent on compulsory service with Roger against Naples; and, in a second attack two years afterwards, completed the ruin of a city which had boasted of fifty thousand inhabitants and the traffic of Asia. The fall of Gaeta is passed over by historians in silence; but the city of Naples was reserved for less disastrous fortunes than its sister republics. Its inhabitants at first resolutely defended their liberties against Roger; they were aided by pope Innocent II. and the Pisans; and the emperor Lothaire, in his second expedition into Italy,

Subjugation of the Campanian republics.

Ruin of Amalfi. 1137

Submission of Gaeta and Naples.

(1137) siding with Innocent against Roger, triumphantly raised the siege of the city and over-ran the continental dependencies of Sicily. But the resistance of Naples ceased with Lothaire's return to Germany, the Pisans forsook the cause, and Roger, immediately recovering his territories, received the submission and respected the municipal institutions of the future capital of southern Italy. 1138

Roger II. king of the Two Sicilies,

The league of the Pisans, of Innocent II., and of his protector Lothaire, against Roger had been occasioned by his alliance with the anti-pope Anaclet. The pride of the Sicilian sovereign had not been contented with his titles of duke and great count: he had aspired to the name of king, and obtained the regal crown from the anti-pope as the reward of his adherence to him. Roger had at first conveyed Anaclet in triumph to Rome, but his rival Innocent was supported by the emperor and relieved by the death of the anti-pope. Still pursuing his hostility against Roger after the death of Lothaire, and rashly venturing his person in the field, the pope fell, as Leo IX. had done formerly, into the hands of the Norman; like that pope, was reconciled with the conqueror; and confirmed to him the title of king and the investiture of the *Two Sicilies*. By a singular train of accidents the misfortunes of two of the weakest of the pontiffs, Leo IX. and Innocent II., had thus enriched the tiara with one of its most valuable jewels. The see of Rome could claim the right of investiture over

by papal investiture. 1139

CHAP. II. PART II. SOUTHERN ITALY. 961—1183

the conquests of the Normans by no better pretensions than the questionable donation of some of the emperors. But the conquerors were eager to consecrate the work of their swords by the protection of the church; and, from this period, the crowns of Naples and Sicily acknowledged for six hundred years the feudal superiority of the popedom.

His death. 1153

The remainder of the reign of Roger was on the whole visited with glory and success; but his last years were saddened by the loss of his elder sons, and after his death one son only, William who succeeded him, and a posthumous daughter Constance, remained of his offspring. The latter was fated to transfer the inheritance of her family to a line of German emperors as we shall observe in the next chapter; and the reign of her brother offers nothing to arrest our observation. He merited by his personal vices his sirname of "The Bad," but he was destitute neither of courage nor ability. During his reign, however, and that of his son, the second William, whose virtues were rewarded with the opposite title of "The Good," the kingdom of the Two Sicilies somewhat declined from the prosperity and power to which Roger II. had elevated it: but it underwent no material vicissitudes in its relation with Italian history. *

William I. the Bad, (1153-1166)

and William II. the Good, (1166-1189) kings of the Sicilies.

* Giannone, Istoria Civile del regno di Napoli, vol. ii. pp. 1—453. Muratori, Annali, A.D. 970—1189. Sismondi, vol. i. pp. 246—297. Gibbon, part of c. 56.

Giannone, a Neapolitan lawyer, has principally devoted his

During the two centuries which intervened between the age of the Othos and the peace of Constance, the riches and power of the Venetian republic were constantly augmenting. But the growth of commercial activity and wealth is so gradual and silent that it can be told only in its results; and the naval wars, which exercised the strength and increased the reputation of the republic, are too numerous to be detailed with minuteness, too indistinct in their immediate consequences and too similar in their events to deserve the attention of the reader. The pirates of the Adriatic, the Saracens, the Normans of Naples, and even the Greeks, to whose empire their republic had once offered at least a respectful deference, were successively combated by the fleets of the Venetians. The course of the republic in these maritime contests alternated between victory and defeat, but her intrinsic energies remained the same under all foreign and even domestic vicissitudes; and whether misfor-

General advance of the power and wealth of Venice.

work to the civil and ecclesiastical history of his country; but much general information may be gleaned from him. It should be mentioned to his honor that the independence of his opinions excited the hostility of the church of Rome, and that the papal influence obtained his exile, during which he died, (1748.)

I have also consulted, but without much advantage for this period, the lately published "Memoires Historiques, &c. sur le Royaume de Naples," of the count Orloff, preceded by a very Russian dedication to the reigning Autocrat. Count Orloff, however, during a residence at Naples collected many interesting documents, and the editor of his volumes, M. A. Duval of the Institute of France, is apparently a man of some learning and research.

CHAP. II. PART II.

REPUBLICS OF VENICE, PISA, AND GENOA. 961—1183

tune clouded her arms, or faction, pestilence, and conflagration raged in her streets, the spirit and perseverance of her citizens still rose superior to every reverse. The progress of Venetian grandeur might be checked for a time, but it was never permanently impeded.

With the general concerns of Italy, Venice had meanwhile little connection. She was sometimes indeed agitated by jealousies and broils with the continental cities in her immediate vicinity, and these disputes were terminated by appeals to arms in which her citizens were usually victorious. But such petty hostilities were of little moment, and the formation of the league of Lombardy was the only occasion in these ages on which Venice can be said to have taken an active part in Italian affairs. Yet even here she was an interested if not a faithless ally. She entered into the Lombard league against Frederic Barbarossa because the continuance of his formidable and arbitrary power might threaten her own independence: but her alliance with the free cities
1174. did not prevent her from assisting the emperor in an unsuccessful attack upon Ancona; because the oppression of a city which pretended to some trade gratified her commercial ambition, and forwarded her schemes for engrossing the navigation of the Adriatic.

In the history of Venice, then, during the two centuries which occupy this chapter, we shall find only three great circumstances for our notice: the subjugation of Dalmatia to her government,

the changes effected in her constitution, and the influence of the crusades upon her wealth and prosperity. We have already had occasion to speak of the wars of Venice with the barbarian pirates of the eastern coasts of the Adriatic, and of the advantages which were gained over them by the doge Pietro Candiano III. After his death, however, the disorders of the republic suspended for some time the prosecution of his successes; but just at the close of the tenth century the republic was again governed by a man of ability and courage, and enabled by a fortunate concurrence of events to complete the security of her seas and extend the limits of her dominion. When the Sclavonians wrested the country of Illyria from the eastern empire and founded the kingdoms of Croatia and Dalmatia, many of the fortified cities on the coasts had successfully resisted the conquerors, and, being deserted by the court of Constantinople, had acquired a republican independence much in the same manner as Naples. But they were surrounded by the barbarians and constantly harassed by their incursions and piracies. After several centuries of suffering, some of these little states were at length induced by the depredations of the Sclavonians of Narenta, the most powerful of the pirates, to unite in a league against that city, and to place the republic of Venice at the head of the confederation. The doge Piero Urseolo II., sailing from the lagunes with the most formidable fleet that the republic had ever put to sea, received

Acquisition of Dalmatia by the republic. 997

CHAP. II. PART II.

REPUBLICS OF VENICE, PISA, AND GENOA. 961—1183

the homage and contingent of such of the Dalmatian cities as had confederated, and persuaded or compelled by arms all the others to enter the same league. He then led his accumulated forces against the barbarians, and reduced them to such a condition as for ever after incapacitated them from a renewal of their piracies. But the alliance of the strong and the weak is always a dangerous association, and the Dalmatian cities which had invited the aid of the doge shortly found that they had only acquired a master. They were, whether by their own consent or otherwise, taken completely under the authority of Venice, and their citizens no longer permitted to enjoy any share in their government. Podestás, chosen from the highest Venetian families, were sent to all the cities to replace the native magistrates with absolute command; and a large extent of the Dalmatian coast being thus subjected to the Venetians, they caused their doge to assume the title of duke of Venice and Dalmatia. But it was long before these conquests were ensured to the republic. The kings of Hungary were redoubtable neighbours, and ever ready to foster rebellion in the Venetian province. The city of Zara in particular revolted with foreign aid more than once, but the fortunes of Venice as often prevailed, and maritime Dalmatia was fated to remain for several centuries the appendage of her sceptre.

Changes in the Venetian constitution.

The Venetians had, for above four hundred years, experienced the evils of a form of govern-

ment which was regulated by no specific limitations, before they attempted to fix the bounds and control the exercise of the sovereign authority. General assemblies were found to be in practice tumultuary and incapable of business: in effect not the people but contending factions prevailed in turn in the nomination of the doges. These magistrates, once elected, were restrained by no legal provisions and punishable by no process but the blind fury of a mob. It was a natural consequence of this absence of all constitutional order that Venice was torn and distracted by the rancorous hostility of party, and that her doges were murdered by the unreasonable and ferocious populace almost as often as any calamity befel the state. From the ambition, too, of her sovereign magistrates, the republic had every thing to dread, and, considering that their authority was unshackled, we may wonder how the state was preserved from hereditary obedience to a ducal family. The doges indeed did frequently associate their sons in their dignity, and the antiquity of this custom was, in the eleventh century, already beginning to give it the air of a right when the first amelioration was effected in the republican constitution. The audacious attempt of a member of the family of Urseolo to seat himself, without even the form of popular suffrage, on the throne which several of his illustrious house had occupied with honor, awakened the jealousy of the Venetians, and produced a funda- 1032

mental law of the state, that the reigning doge should never associate a son in the government. It was likewise provided that he should not determine on affairs of government without the consent of two counsellors who were given to him. He was required also on extraordinary occasions not to act without the approbation of some of the principal citizens, whom however he might himself select to advise him. These latter termed pregadi, "the requested," from being solicited by the doge to render him their assistance, were the foundation of the Venetian senate of after times.

One hundred and forty years were suffered to elapse before any further alteration was attempted in the Venetian constitution; and it was at length in the anarchy which followed the murder of a doge, that the council of justice, the only permanent deliberative body of the state, persuaded the people to adopt a political system, which at once offered security against the exercise of arbitrary power by the doges, and obviated the inconvenience of the general and tumultuary assemblies of the people. We are not informed by what skilful address the council of justice prevailed upon the people to consent to an innovation which in a great measure deprived the democracy of its influence; but from this period may certainly be dated the foundation of the oligarchical government of Venice. Without entirely abolishing the general assemblies of the nation,

which were still to be convened upon extraordinary occasions, it was decreed that the supreme powers of the state should thenceforward be seated, conjointly with the doge, in a representative council of four hundred and eighty members.* But the election of this great council, as it was termed, was not to be vested immediately in the people. The citizens of each of the six districts of Venice annually chose two tribunes; and every one of these twelve magistrates nominated forty members of the representative body. The natural weight of birth and wealth filled the great council almost exclusively with men of the first families of Venice; and, though the general assemblies of the people continued sometimes to meet and exercise certain functions for nearly two centuries longer, their real authority had already expired. We shall hereafter trace the steps by which the aristocratic order perfected their unresisted acquisition of sovereignty.

Establishment of the great council of Venice, 1172

But the great council was still too large an assembly for the steady and secret dispatch of affairs, or the effectual control of the doge. Two lesser bodies were therefore deputed from its number: the one of six members formed the little council of the doge, composed with him the signiory or visible representative of the state, and discharged all the duties of executive admi-

and of the little council

* I know not why M. Daru has assumed the numbers of the great council to have been four hundred and *seventy*. He is certainly not supported by the best authorities in this statement.

CHAP. II. PART II.

REPUBLICS OF VENICE, PISA, AND GENOA. 961—1183

nistration.* Except in conjunction with these counsellors, the doge was bound by his inaugural oath to transact no business with foreign states. The other deputed body was the senate or assembly of pregadi, who, from being originally chosen at the pleasure of the doge, now came to be nominated instead, to the number of sixty, by the great council. They were gifted with such authority as rendered them in effect within a smaller compass the depositaries of all the sovereignty which lay in the great council itself. The legislative functions remained indeed with the latter body, but the right of imposing taxes, and of making peace and war was vested in the senate. It is however doubtful whether the pregadi were thus transformed, in their mode of nomination and their character, into a necessary part of the Venetian government quite as soon as the great council commenced its existence, and a celebrated native historian has dated the change fifty years later.

and senate.

Severe restrictions on the powers of the doges.

The establishment of the great council and the enactments which proceeded from that body had effected a remarkable revolution; and the unlimited prerogative of the doges was at once reduced to a powerless dignity. But the precautions of the aristocracy were carried even farther.

1179 The administration of criminal justice was for-

* It is singular that M. Sismondi, generally so full and accurate an authority, has passed over the creation of the little council with no more than a passing allusion to its functions.

mally placed, in a council called "the forty," beyond the control of the first magistrate; and the terms of his initiative oath were a virtual renunciation not only of all substantial authority, but even of personal liberty. The form of the ducal election, primarily seated in the whole of the great council, was reduced to such a mixture of ballot and free nomination among the members, as totally prevented any scheme for the aggrandizement of particular families or parties by the choice of improper persons for the dogeship. This wholesome jealousy of undue bias in the balloted electors was at subsequent periods carried to such a height, that a curious complication of chances entirely prevented its being foreseen on what members of the great council the duty of appointing a doge could by probability fall.

Form of ducal elections.

The settlement of the Venetian constitution prepared the republic for her brilliant career of commercial and political grandeur; and a new source of wealth and power had meanwhile been unfolding itself to her cupidity and ambition. No circumstance contributed more effectually to her subsequent prosperity than the religious wars of the Europeans for the recovery of the Holy Land from the muhammedan infidels. But, as the influence of the crusades was felt with equal advantage by two other maritime republics of Italy which had in the eleventh and twelfth centuries been gradually rising in importance, some account of the origin of these states may be

appropriately introduced in this place; and we shall consider in one view the share which Venice, Pisa, and Genoa occupied in these celebrated expeditions to the scenes of human redemption.

Pisa.

Long after the free states of Lombardy had begun to govern themselves, the cities of Tuscany for the most part acknowledged obedience to imperial governors. The history of Florence and the other inland towns of the province is however very obscure, until we discern the earliest symptoms of their partial independence in the divisions excited in Italy by the wars between the Lombard cities and pope Alexander III. on the one part, and the emperor Frederic Barbarossa on the other. In these wars Sienna, Pistoia, Lucca, and the rural nobility of Tuscany sided with the empire, and Florence, as well as the republic of Pisa, with the church. But no great event marked the progress of hostilities in Tuscany; and, of the annals of the Tuscan cities in these ages, those of Pisa alone demand our observation. Even her early records are few and scanty. She began, however, to be eminent as a commercial city before the close of the tenth century, and her gallies were perhaps the first which dared to encounter the Saracen corsairs who ravaged the western coasts of Italy. Her situation, in the midst of a fertile district, at the mouth of the Arno, afforded for the light barks of the times a harbour equally sheltered by its shoals from tempests and hostile approach; and the Pisans, devoting themselves to commerce, and habi-

Her early commerce and enterprises.

tuated to naval encounters with the Saracens, began to cover the Mediterranean with their fleets. As mariners they were famous for intrepidity, and, as their strength increased with their traffic, they successfully undertook two remarkable conquests. From the Moors who had long held Sardinia they wrested that island; and the musulman sovereign, after a protracted and gallant struggle, became their captive and ended his days in the dungeons of Pisa. The conquerors parcelled out his kingdom into four great fiefs, and bestowed them upon the same number of noble Pisan families by whom principally the expedition had been fitted out. Sixty-five years after the loss of Sardinia the infidels had again to mourn at the prowess of these republicans. The Balearic Isles which composed a Saracen monarchy were reduced in a single campaign: * one musulman prince perished in the field, the capture of a second swelled the pride of the victors, and immense treasures were brought from Majorca to their city.

Her conquest of Sardinia, 1017—1050

and of the Balearic Isles. 1115

Genoa.

While Pisa was thus growing in power, a neighbouring and rival republic was pursuing a similar career of commerce and enterprize. Surrounded by rocky and barren mountains whose surface is utterly destitute of verdure, Genoa has received from nature but a single gift: a safe and capacious harbour. With this solitary advan-

* This conquest, however, was not long preserved.

CHAP. II. PART II.

REPUBLICS OF VENICE, PISA, AND GENOA. 961—1183

tage her citizens, applying themselves like the Pisans to commerce, and acquiring possession of the maritime territory of Liguria east and west of their capital, claimed to govern themselves like other Italian cities, and rose to a similar grandeur with Pisa. The foreign history of the two republics is completely interwoven. Allies against the infidels and rivals in commerce, they first assisted each other in mutual victories, and then quarrelled over the spoil. It was with the aid of Genoa that Pisa conquered Sardinia, and the former republic at the same time reduced the island of Corsica under its own dominion. This proved a more durable though a less brilliant conquest than the Pisan acquisition. But the fortunes of Genoa altogether were fated to be more lasting, though in the outset less splendid, than the glories of Pisa.

Connection of her early history with that of Pisa.

Her conquest of Corsica.

Constitution of the Pisan and Genoese republics.

No chronicle has transmitted to our days any account of the particular form of the Pisan constitution, but it appears that the government was consular: we learn the original structure of the Genoese republic from the pen of one of its magistrates of the twelfth century. Consuls, chosen at first for three or four years but afterwards annually, and varying in number from four to six, were the supreme directors of the state. They were usually of noble family, and elected in a general parliament of their fellow-citizens. In like manner each of the quarters of the city annually chose one of the seven judges of the republic,

and an occasional appointment of a select council by the general assembly provided for the correction of the laws. This simple constitution probably long answered every purpose of freedom and internal peace; and, to the end of the twelfth century, the popular assemblies of Genoa seem with honorable singularity to have been disturbed by no criminal excesses. Once only the 1169 rivalry of two noble families split the citizens into factions and threatened civil war; but the venerable archbishop, labouring with a spirit which rarely belonged to the churchmen of the age, exerted the weight of his sacred vocation in effecting a reconciliation between the contending parties.

Furious wars between the two states.

It was not until the beginning of the twelfth century that the jealousy between Pisa and Genoa broke out into open warfare. But by their vicinity and commercial emulation, their equality of strength and clashing interests, they had long been secret enemies; and it is strange how their natural rivalry and hatred were smothered for above one hundred years. When the flame was once kindled, it burnt with fierce and almost incessant activity. The attempt of one pope to subject the churches of Corsica to the Pisan archbishop produced the first conflict, and it raged without intermission for fourteen years, until the 1119—1133 mediation of another pontiff calmed the irritation which the partiality of his predecessor had excited. He removed the cause of dispute by giving Genoa

an archbishop, and transferring the Corsican clergy to his jurisdiction. If we may credit the statement of the Genoese chronicler that in the first year of this war his republic attacked Pisa with a fleet of eighty gallies, attended by four large vessels with battering engines, and manned by twenty-two thousand combatants, of whom a fourth were armed with the casque and cuirass, we shall form a magnificent idea of the power of these maritime cities; since Pisa resisted so immense an armament, and balanced the indecisive event of the war. It was immediately, too, after this lengthened and arduous struggle that Pisa,

1137 with unimpaired strength, accomplished the ruin of Amalfi as we have already seen. But no long interval of forbearance could prevail between the Genoese and Pisans, who constantly encountered each other in their voyages, and mingled the prosecution of their bitter animosities with the peaceful occupations of trade. In their commercial expeditions to the east, their fleets frequently engaged each other with fury, and one memo-

1162 rable war was produced by the conflict of their colonies at Constantinople. It terminated like former hostilities without material advantage to either state.

Part taken by Venice, Pisa, and Genoa in the crusades.

On the waters of the Levant, both Genoa and Pisa had, long before this contest, found a third combatant in the rivalry of Venice. The three republics had alike engaged in the crusades; and the transport of the soldiers of the cross to the

shores of Asia became for them all an important and lucrative employment. Their vessels returned to port laden with the produce of these eastern climes, and the services which they rendered to the crusaders procured for their states most valuable privileges of traffic in all the cities which were conquered from the infidels on the Syrian coasts. During the possession of Palestine by the Christians, Venice, Pisa, and Genoa were thus the channels through which the produce of the east was conveyed to the people of Europe. The wealth of Venice in particular was prodigiously increased by the remuneration which she exacted, as the price of her exertions in carrying the crusading hosts to the scenes of their enterprises, and provisioning them on their voyages. In the first crusade she employed two hundred vessels in this manner, and the religious object of the expedition did not prevent her fleet from attacking that of Pisa, though occupied in the same purpose. Alternately sharing in the efforts of the crusaders against the common enemy, extorting from their allies every selfish advantage, and constantly endeavouring the destruction of each other, the three republics prosecuted a singular career of religious fanaticism, commercial avarice, and deadly animosities. But they all found the same profit in their Asiatic enterprises; and while the rest of Europe poured out her best blood and resources in the barren pursuit of an imaginary duty, the maritime re-

Consequent wealth of these republics.

CHAP. II. PART II.

publics of Italy were alone enriched and invigorated amidst the general exhaustion. *

REPUBLICS OF VENICE, PISA, AND GENOA. 961—1183

* Muratori Annali, A. D. 961—1183. (passim.) Sismondi, vol. i. pp. 321—364. iii. 275—284. Sandi, Stor. Civ. Venez. vol. i. b. iii. pp. 297. ad fin. vol. ii. bb. iii—iv. ad p. 590. Daru. Hist. de Venise, vol. i. pp. 102—259.

CHAPTER III.

FROM THE PEACE OF CONSTANCE, TO THE EXTINCTION OF THE HOUSE OF SWABIA, A.D. 1183—1268.

PART I.

State of the Lombard Cities after the Peace of Constance—Last Years of Frederic Barbarossa—Reign of the Emperor Henry VI.—Affairs of Naples and Sicily—Acquisition of those Countries by Henry VI.—His Cruelties and Death—Aspect of Italy at the Close of the Twelfth Century—Occurrences in the Trevisan March—Rise of the Families of Romano and Este—Factions of the Guelfs and Ghibelins—Pontificate of Innocent III.—His Exercise of arbitrary Authority over temporal Princes—Ambitious Schemes of Innocent in Italy—League of Tuscany—Interregnum in the Empire—Otho IV.—His Contest with Innocent III.—Continued Wars between the Lombard Cities—The Emperor Frederic II.—State of his Kingdom of the Sicilies—Crusade of Frederic—Excommunication against him—Return of Frederic to Europe—Papal Intrigues—Renewal of the League of Lombardy—Singular Power of a Dominican Friar—War between the Emperor and the Lombard League—Extinction of Freedom in the Trevisan March—Papal Persecution of Frederic II.—Council of Lyons—Sentence of Deposition against the Emperor—Unshaken Power, Death, and Character of Frederic II.

THE freedom which the cities of Lombardy had so gloriously asserted, and which the terms of the peace of Constance promised to perpetuate,

CHAP. III. PART I.

State of the Lombard cities after the Peace of Constance.

was clouded by their internal distractions and too shortly extinguished by their selfish jealousies and vicious factions. Even while our admiration of their unconquerable resistance to oppression is warm and recent, we are presented with the revolting picture of vindictive and inextinguishable hatreds. The Italian character in the middle ages was unhappily overcast by the darker passions of the human heart, and the energy and strength of purpose which, otherwise, might have qualified the national mind for a long career of virtuous grandeur, were prostituted to the gratification of implacable revenge and flagitious ambition.

The same spirit which had humbled the power of Frederic Barbarossa might have cemented the numerous states of Lombardy in a permanent and invincible confederation, if the deadly hostility by which the cities were animated against each other had not far outweighed every patriotic and honorable feeling. The elements of the Lombard league had been scattered even before the consummation of its object, and they could never again be wholly collected. United in no one common bond of safety, the cities were left without protection against foreign enemies or domestic traitors; and in little more than half a century they had all, in well merited slavery to tyrants, reaped the bitter punishment of their general disunion. The same lasting hostility between the aristocratic and plebeian orders, which had existed in the commonwealths of antiquity, agitated the

Lombard republics; and this fatal discord being almost always in action produced, or was varied only by, multiplied factions which were generated with appalling facility. The noxious vices, which were cherished in the corrupted soil of private life by the intensity of individual passion, composed a fruitful hotbed of political crime. Motives of personal revenge or even the caprices of accident were at any time sufficient for the excitement of sanguinary public feuds, or the indulgence of shameful injustice and atrocious proscription. It is a striking proof of the reciprocal suspicion of partiality and violence which filled the citizens of the Italian republics, that they dared not entrust the administration of justice to the hands of their townsmen. Immediately after the peace of Constance, all the cities adopted the custom of electing a judicial magistrate out of the pale of their own society.

The administration of these republics confided to Podestás.

The podestá, as this officer was termed, was always a nobleman of some one of the neighbouring cities, and usually a man of distinguished character. He was jealously cut off from all society and friendship among the citizens, but he enjoyed a dictatorial authority in the execution of justice, and the body of the people bound themselves to second him by arms, against the turbulent and powerful offenders who habitually set his decrees at defiance. His power in the state was in some measure shared by the consuls and committees of trust (credenza); but he was frequently the general as well as the judge of the

CHAP. III. PART I.

republic, and whatever might have been the necessity which prompted this concentration of authority in one individual, it is not improbable that the practice of confiding all the executive administration to a podestá, had a pernicious influence in preparing the public mind for submission to a single will.

Last years of Frederic Barbarossa.

The gradual overthrow of the liberties of the Lombards, which commenced very soon after the peace of Constance, was wholly the work of their own parricidal hands. Frederic Barbarossa, so long their oppressor, would appear from this epoch sincerely to have abandoned his projects against them. Convinced by experience that the hope of subjugating them was utterly vain, he gave a new direction to his ambition, and was invited by the state of the Sicilies to attempt the addition of that kingdom to the Swabian dominions. The probability that William II. would die without issue rendered his aunt Constance the presumptive heiress to his throne, and the emperor succeeded in effecting a marriage be-

1186 tween that princess and his eldest son Henry. His future claims upon the inheritance of his daughter-in-law might be promoted by the friendship or opposed by the hostility of the Lombard republics, and Frederic earnestly laboured to conciliate the affection and compose the differences of those states. But he did not live to require their assistance, and was fated to terminate his existence in other scenes. All Europe was

1187 afflicted at this epoch with the intelligence that

Jerusalem had fallen before the power of Saladin: the pope proclaimed a new crusade, and the emperor, though in advanced years, engaged with all the courage of his youth in an expedition to Palestine for the recovery of the holy sepulchre. He led a numerous army into the east, and was victoriously traversing the plains of Armenia when he was drowned at the passage of an insignificant stream. 1189

Reign of the emperor Henry VI. 1189—1197

The death of Barbarossa was followed in the same year by that of William II. of Sicily, and Henry VI., the son of the emperor, who had for the last five years of his father's life worn the crowns of Germany and Italy, now succeeded both to the imperial diadem, and, through his wife Constance, to legitimate pretensions over the kingdom of the Two Sicilies. But the Norman barons detested the prospect of subjection to a foreign monarch, and their aversion was not diminished by the character of Henry. He had inherited the courage, but possessed neither the talents which had shed lustre over the criminal ambition of his parent, nor the magnanimity of which Barbarossa was sometimes capable. Even the cruelty, which had disgraced the conqueror of Milan and Crema, was mercy when compared with the inherent ferocity of his son.

Affairs of Naples and Sicily.

Though Constance was the only legitimate descendant of the royal Norman line, the Sicilians found in Tancred, the natural son of one of her brothers, a worthy inheritor of the courage and virtues of the Rogers; and, disdaining the Ger-

CHAP. III. PART I.

man yoke, the nobles of the Two Sicilies placed him by acclamation on their throne. He successfully defended both Sicily and Naples against the
1190 power of Henry, and the new emperor, after losing by pestilence the greater part of an army which he led against him, was compelled to a precipitate retreat from the Neapolitan dominions. His empress fell into the hands of Tancred, but he generously restored her without ransom or conditions to her husband, and during the brief residue of his life was disturbed by no further attacks. His reign was too short for the happiness of his subjects; and, after seeing his eldest son perish in his arms in the flower of his youth,
1194 he himself sank into a premature grave. The indulgence which he had shewn to the wife of his cruel rival was repaid to his own widow and children by shocking barbarity. The helpless boy who succeeded to his crown was unable to defend it; his nobles left without a leader submitted on the approach of Henry; and the emperor possessed himself of the Two Sicilies.

Acquisition of those countries by Henry VI.

His cruelties

The unhappy family of Tancred, surrendering themselves upon promise of favorable treatment, were sent into Germany by the savage conqueror, who detained them in a long captivity and deprived the youthful king of his eyes. The emperor followed up this atrocity by the exercise of remorseless oppression and devilish vengeance against his new subjects. Sicily was drained of her treasures which were conveyed to Germany; and, of the barons who had supported the cause

of Tancred, some were hanged, others were burned alive, and the remainder escaped only with the loss of their eyes. The exhortations of the pope were unavailing to stop this series of horrors; the prayers of Constance were equally vain in obtaining mercy for the subjects of her fathers, and the indignant princess suffered herself to be numbered with conspirators against the inhuman tyranny of her husband. The sudden death of this monster, while engaged in the siege of a revolted castle, brought deliverance to suffering humanity; Constance herself, who on his decease assumed the reins of government for her infant son, survived him but a year; and the orphan child, who succeeded to the hereditary dominions of the houses of Swabia and Sicily by the title of Frederic II., was left at the age of four years destitute of protection and surrounded by rivals.*

and death. 1197

Aspect of Italy at the close of the twelfth century.

During the reign of Henry VI. and the early minority of Frederic II., it is difficult to offer any distinct and connected view of the condition of Italy. The whole country was convulsed by the internal feuds of contending factions in the different republics, and filled with the violence of petty warfare; but no great and determinate object affords consistency to these confused and various struggles, or exhibits them in a combined and intelligible shape. The chronicles, too,

* Sismondi, vol. ii. pp. 234—263. Muratori, A.D. 1183—1197.

CHAP. III. PART I.

of the Lombard cities at this juncture are either silent, or barren of important information, and some occurrences in the Trevisan March—the ancient Venetia—may alone claim our attention. These are interesting as connected with the rise of two famous Italian families, and the clearest contemporary records are fortunately those who respect them.

Occurrences in the Trevisan March.

The Trevisan March is a mountainous district abounding in situations of strength, and the nobility of the province, occupying these with their castles, had not been generally reduced, like the châtelains of the plains on the upper Po, into subjection to the neighbouring cities. They were therefore a formidable body: and at once preserving their rural fiefs, and making choice of that residence in the cities which with the Lombard nobles was compulsory, the influence of power and high birth threw all the offices of the magistracy into their hands. Even where the Italian nobility had been compelled to become citizens of the republics, the abodes which they erected within the walls were castles rather than houses. Built of massive stone and strengthened by towers, they were rendered capable of enduring the assaults to which the turbulent violence of their tenants and the vicissitudes of faction often exposed them. But in the cities of the Trevisan March, in Verona, Padua, Vicenza, and Treviso, the nobles secured their voluntary residence within the walls by the construction of regular fortresses, which might set at defiance every

burst of popular commotion. Huge gates and barriers of iron defended the entrance to these strongholds; their solid walls were manned by numerous bands of faithful retainers; and, if the external bulwarks should be forced, a square donjon tower or keep in the interior afforded a sure retreat for the lord and his followers. The insolence of power which was begotten by impunity filled the cities of the March with rivalry and bloodshed between the great families, and their rural fiefs were the perpetual scenes of open hostility.

Rise of the families of Romano and Este.

Among the nobility of the Trevisan March, the most distinguished towards the close of the twelfth century were the families of Romano and Este. The former were descended from Eccelino, a German knight, who had accompanied the emperor Conrad II. into Italy, and received from his master the fiefs of Romano and Onaro in recompense for his services. The rise of the family which he thus founded was fortunate and rapid: the lords of Romano successively enlarged the acquisitions of their ancestor, and under his namesake Eccelino, the Stammerer, (known in history as Eccelino I.) their patrimony had already grown into a formidable principality.

The narrative of one enterprise undertaken by this Eccelino da Romano may be appropriately introduced, as illustrating both the aggrandizement of his family and the manners of his age. He was united by the ties of marriage and amity with Tisolino of the Campo San Pietro, a noble

CHAP. III. PART I.

Paduan, and was acquainted by his friend with his design of marrying his son to Cecilia the orphan heiress of Manfred Ricco, signor of Abano. The lord of Romano was seduced by the advantage which so wealthy an alliance might afford to his own house, to betray the confidence of Tisolino, and he secretly plotted to obtain the hand of the lady for his own son Eccelino II. By corrupting her guardians he got the heiress into his own hands, and, carrying her to his castle of Bassano, celebrated her nuptials with his son. This act of treachery filled the family of Campo San Pietro with violent indignation, and instigated Gerard the son of Tisolino, who had been the destined husband of Cecilia, to a horrible revenge. As the bride, with a more brilliant than warlike train, passed into the Paduan territory to visit her demesnes, she was seized by Gerard, borne off to
1190 his castle, and there brutally dishonored. The wretched victim, on being suffered to return to Bassano, did not attempt to conceal the outrage: she was divorced, and her husband married again, but both her estates and those of the second wife of Eccelino II. swelled the power of the lords of Romano. They swore an eternal hatred to the family of San Pietro, and the deadly feud between the two houses, which was perpetuated for many generations, could be satisfied only by blood.

While Eccelino II. was augmenting his greatness, and embroiling the republics of upper Venetia which bordered on his estates in destructive wars by alliance with or hostility to his cause, the

increasing power of the house of Este was the signal for tumults and disorders in the central part of the province. The possessions of this ancient family were situated between Padua, Verona, Vicenza, and Ferrara, and their ambition was fatal to the repose of all these states. A fortunate union with an heiress of Ferrara established 1180
Obizzo, marquis of Este in that city, and placed him at the head of a faction within its walls. In this, like the subsequent marriage of Eccelino, another noble house had been supplanted by treachery: furious commotions were excited between the rivals, and, during a civil war, which raged within the walls of Ferrara for nearly forty years, the hostile factions were ten times alternately expelled from the city. But the power of the marquisses of Este continued to increase, and at the close of the twelfth century they divided the possession of sovereign influence in the Trevisan March with Eccelino da Romano II.* By

* In a contemporary chronicle there is an interesting account of a reconciliation between this Eccelino II. and the marquis Azzo VI. of Este, which curiously describes the manners of the times. Notwithstanding their mutual hatred, they were both adherents of the emperor Otho IV., and, when that monarch entered Italy in 1209, he strove to advance his own interests by establishing friendship between them. The rival chiefs repaired to his camp, but, they were no sooner together in the imperial presence, than Eccelino accused his enemy of having formerly made a treacherous attempt upon his life. "We had been attached to each other," said he, "in our infancy and I thought him my friend. We were together at Venice, and I was walking with him in the place of St. Mark, when I was attacked by armed

CHAP. III. PART I.

their descent from the German line of the Guelfs they were the natural enemies of the Swabian emperors: the lords of Romano were, on the other hand, attached to those monarchs by the memory of benefits; and the two families headed the GUELF and GHIBELIN parties of Venetia.

bravos: at that moment the marquis seized my arm to prevent me from defending myself, and, if I had not shaken him off by a violent effort, I should infallibly have been murdered as one of my soldiers was by my side." Eccelino concluded, after making other accusations, by repeatedly challenging the marquis to single combat; but the emperor interfered, imposed silence on the rivals, and, on the next day, ordered them both to attend him on horseback. Placing one on each side of him as he rode along, he commanded them in French — which it seems was the fashionable language even in those days—to salute each other: "Sir Eccelino, salute the marquis," and Eccelino, uncovering with a respectful obeisance, cried, "Sir marquis, God save you." But Azzo preserved his superior dignity by returning the salutation without vailing his bonnet. "Sir marquis," continued the emperor, "salute Eccelino," and then Azzo cried, "God save you Sir Eccelino." Thus far the reconciliation was but little advanced, but the road becoming narrower, Otho passed on and left the rivals beside each other. In a short time they fell into earnest discourse; and then the suspicious emperor, observing their amity, began to be almost as uneasy as when he had feared their discord. On his return to his tent he sent for Eccelino, and inquired what had been the subject of their conversation. "We spoke," said the knight, "of the days of our youth, and we have returned to our early friendship." Gerardi Maurisii Historia, &c. p. 19. et seq. (Scrip. Rer. Ital. vol. viii.)

Gibbon has copied the same story with some slight variation, and adds: "The apprehensions of the emperor were groundless; and their deadly feuds, in council, in the field, in the cities, continued to rage with alternate success till they both slept in the tranquillity of the grave." Gibbon's Antiquities of the House of Brunswick, Miscell. Works, vol. iii. p. 432.

Factions of the Guelfs and Ghibelins.

These terms of Guelf and Ghibelin, of ominous sound to an Italian ear, were received from Germany where they had long been the war-cry in the quarrels of the houses of Bavaria and Swabia; but they were not introduced into Italy until the first years of the thirteenth century. The former was the family name of the dukes of Bavaria, from whom, as is well known, the present royal line of Great Britain claims its descent: the latter is derived from Wibelung, a Franconian town, the birth-place of the emperor Conrad II., who was the progenitor through females of the Swabian emperors. The Ghibelins were therefore the adherents of these sovereigns, the Guelfs their opponents; and, in the struggles between the emperors and the popes, the friends of the church readily assumed the title of Guelfs. But when these names, the seeds of bitter animosities, were once sown in the rank soil of Italian faction, their fruits might be recognized only for their poisonous qualities. Parties were at first Guelf or Ghibelin by their attachment to the papacy or the empire, but afterwards by no other principle than that of mutual and unintelligible hatred. *

Pontificate of Innocent III. 1197—1216

From the peace of Constance to the death of Frederic I., and during the whole reign of Henry VI., the lustre of the papacy was dimmed before the star of those monarchs. But the weakness of the minor, Frederic II., and an interregnum in the

* Sismondi, vol. ii. pp. 264—286. Muratori, ad an. 1175—1205. passim. Gibbon's Antiquities of the House of Brunswick. Miscell. Works. iii. p. 436.

CHAP. III. PART I.

empire, offered a favorable occasion for the assertion of the papal authority; and just at this epoch arose a pontiff, the greatest, except Gregory VII., of all those who at successive periods knew how to revive and to increase the slumbering energies of the church. In the same year which terminated the life of Henry VI., Innocent III. was raised to the tiara at the early age of thirty-seven. Uniting the courage and ambition of a Roman noble, with reputed sanctity as a churchman, he not only succeeded in elevating the ecclesiastical pretensions of Gregory VII. to a stupendous height, but aspired to seize upon a temporal state for the papacy in the centre of Italy. And though he did not entirely perfect this scheme, and three centuries more were to pass before the secure consolidation of the temporal dominions of the Roman church, Innocent III. was the real founder of the structure which has lasted to our times.

His exercise of arbitrary authority over temporal princes.

The monstrous assumption of arbitrary dominion over all the temporal powers of the world, which Innocent audaciously maintained, scarcely belongs to Italian history. Wielding the thunders of excommunication and interdict with the skill of a consummate politician, he augmented the terrors of these ecclesiastical arms by the address with which he selected the moment for their exercise; and his celebrated triumph over the most pusillanimous of our English kings sinks into contempt before his subjection of the other sovereigns of Europe. Our John was a heartless

coward, but Philip Augustus of France, and the monarchs of Arragon, Portugal, and Denmark were not used to tremble before less dreaded enemies than Innocent.

Ambitious schemes of Innocent in Italy.

It is curious to observe how the power of the greatest popes was strengthened by distance. The superstitious veneration which was entertained for the chiefs of Christendom was ever most feeble nearest to its source; and a long familiarity with the weakness and crimes of the pontiffs left little room for fear and respect in the Italian mind. While Innocent III. lorded it over transalpine despots, he was necessitated to resort to petty intrigues for the extension of his slender authority in Italy. The immense possessions, bequeathed by the famous countess Matilda to the Holy See, had hitherto been withheld by the Swabian emperors, and Henry VI. had bestowed in fief upon his different German captains the March of Ancona, the duchies of Romagna and Spoleto, and the marquisate of Tuscany, all of which were supposed to be included in the donation of the countess. The tyranny of the German chieftains had excited unqualified hatred, and their weakness, after the death of their monarch, provoked universal resistance to their sway. Innocent easily wrested the March of Ancona and the duchies of Spoleto and Romagna from their feeble grasp; but, so sensible was he of his own want of strength, that he prudently granted the former fief to the marquis of Este, and confirmed the muni-

CHAP. III. PART I.

cipal independence of the cities of Spoleto and Romagna, with a general reservation of the papal supremacy. But over the more powerful cities of Tuscany, which had enjoyed a republican independence under the lieutenants of the emperors, he could not hope to claim even a nominal sovereignty, and, as it was his interest by whatever means to prevent the revival of the imperial power, he contented himself with achieving a general Guelphic league of all the Tuscan republics, except Pisa, for the preservation of their common rights. Of this association he was placed at the head, and it was declared to be expressly established for the honor of the apostolic see. The cities engaged themselves to protect the church, and to acknowledge no emperor without the approbation of the pope. By the testament of the empress Constance, Innocent acquired even a greater advantage. The young orphan, Frederic, was placed under his protection as the feudal superior of the crown of the Two Sicilies, and the authority in that kingdom thus passed into his hands.

League of Tuscany. 1197

Interregnum in the empire.

The intrigues of Innocent for the subversion of the imperial power were not confined within the Alps. On the death of Henry VI. the German electors, disregarding the claims of his infant son, were divided between two competitors, Philip of Swabia and Otho the Guelf. Philip was of a house always inimical to the church; the family of the latter had ever been obedient to the popes; and Innocent therefore espoused his cause, which

was for many years the weakest. But the death of Philip finally placed Otho, the fourth of his name, on the German throne; and for once the papacy and the empire were in amity. But the interests of the two powers were too opposite to permit this harmony to last; and when Otho IV., entering Italy, had received the imperial diadem from Innocent, the new emperor refused to alienate the fiefs of the countess Matilda from his crown. Innocent now stirred up opposition to the prince whom he had so long protected; the marquis of Este and other Guelfs remained faithful to the church even against a Guelf emperor; and, at least in name, the politics of the Italian factions were reversed. The interest of the reader would be little excited in the obscure vicissitudes of the wars which ensued. The successful resource of the pope was to convert his young pupil Frederic II., whom he had hitherto neglected, into a rival for his former ally. He caused the youthful monarch to pass into Germany, where he found a powerful party in the rebellious subjects of Otho; and the emperor, after some successes, was compelled to abandon Italy for the defence of his German dominions.

Otho IV. emperor.

1209

His contest with the pope.

1212

Innocent III. had now reached the pinnacle of grandeur: his worldly and inordinate ambition had been crowned with brilliant success, and, if we could forget the assumed sanctity of his office, his greediness of power might not excite severer reprehension than the similar passion of temporal sovereigns. But his character is darkened

CHAP. III. PART I.

by the spirit of unrelenting persecution, and the establishment of the Inquisition will cover his memory with everlasting infamy. The close of his life was passed in enforcing the horrible massacres of the Paulician heretics; and he died at Perugia, after a reign of eighteen years, while the south of France was yet deluged with the blood of the Albigenses. *

Death of Innocent III. 1216

Continued wars between the Lombard cities.

At the period of Innocent's death Frederic II. still disputed the possession of the imperial crown with Otho IV. Germany was the field on which the rivals personally engaged, but all Italy was filled with discord in support of their opposite pretensions. The flames of war were every where lighted up, and under the appellation of Guelfs and Ghibelins, and in the struggle between the papal and imperial interests, the Italian factions enjoyed a feasible pretence for the indulgence of their rancorous animosities. It therefore mattered not that the nature of the contest reversed the denomination and the principles of parties. When the pope and the adherents of the church supported the cause of Frederic, the Guelfs upheld the natural chief of the Ghibelins and that, too, against a Guelf emperor: when the Milanese assisted the pretensions of Otho IV., they forgot their jealousy of the imperial prerogatives and their Guelf principle of attachment to the church, in hereditary hatred to the house

* Sismondi, vol. ii. pp. 287—347. Muratori, A.D. 1197—1216. Mosheim, Ecclesiastical History, cent. ii. part ii. cap. 2.

of Swabia. They formed a league with Crema, Placentia, Lodi, and other cities, and were furiously opposed by Pavia, Cremona, and the rest of the Ghibelin Lombard republics. In this contest almost all the cities claim by their chronicles to have been victorious, and it may therefore be conjectured that success was pretty equally balanced. Pavia, however, was oppressed by the superiority of Milan, which with flourishing manufactures and a fertile territory had, since the æra of its rebuilding in the war against Barbarossa, yearly increased in population, riches, and warlike strength. The Milanese devastated the territory of Pavia, and compelled that state to renounce its ancient party, and to become the 1217
subject-ally of their republic. But on the other hand this triumph of Milan was clouded by a partial reverse. At the obstinate battle of Ghibello, the Cremonese, in concert with the forces of other cities of the Ghibelin league, inflicted a memorable defeat upon the Milanese and their 1218
partisans.

It is a singular proof of the influence of free institutions in almost all the cities, that, until the subversion of the Lombard liberties, neither internal discord nor these fierce wars between the republican leagues prevented the rapid growth of population and wealth. The citizens were frequently compelled by the pressure of their superabundant numbers to increase the circuit of their walls; and we should be wholly at a loss to account for their surprising prosperity in the

CHAP. III. PART I.

midst of so many disorders and commotions, if we failed to consider the immense advantages which, so long as a vestige of liberty remained, were enjoyed by their free and industrious artisans over the oppressed and unprotected peasantry of the country.

Frederic II. emperor.

Otho IV. maintained an unfortunate contest in Germany with Frederic II. for several years: but

1218 his death at last left that young monarch without a competitor for the imperial crown. The church had hitherto played Frederic off as an useful engine against the power of Otho; but he had no sooner prevailed in the struggle than he became himself an object of suspicion and dread. Honorius III., the successor of Innocent, demurred for some time to confer on him the imperial crown which that pope had promised; and he extorted from the new emperor a vow that he would undertake the deliverance of the Holy Land from

1220 the Saracens, before he would, finally, perform the ceremony.

State of his kingdom of the Sicilies.

But the situation of the kingdom of the Sicilies furnished ample employment for the attention of Frederic, and several years were occupied in repairing the evils which a long anarchy had entailed on those countries. Ever since the death of William the Bad, the Neapolitan provinces had been almost always a prey to civil wars. Every town or castle was possessed by some baron, and the royal authority was nearly extinguished by the ambition of the feudal chieftains. But, by the admixture of vigour and treachery, Frederic, who

was not very scrupulous in the measures which he pursued, succeeded in breaking the force of the aristocracy, and in restoring subordination and peace. The condition of Sicily had been yet more desperate than that of the continent. The remains of its Saracen population had been driven to revolt by the oppression of the Christian barons of the island, and had invited the assistance of their piratical brethren from Africa. But Frederic defeated the rebels in several encounters, and, completing their subjection at different periods, removed them from the island to the provinces of Naples, where he settled them in the fertile plains of the Capitanate and in the lovely valley of Nocéra. These musulmans in their new colonies proved the most faithful of his subjects, and supplied him with excellent troops in his Italian wars. To the city of Naples, Frederic was a real benefactor. He built a magnificent palace within its walls, founded its university, and established the grandeur of this beautiful capital.

Crusade of Frederic—Excommunication against him.

Frederic had probably never intended to fulfil his engagement of delivering the Holy Land from the hands of the infidels. But while he was engaged in regulating the affairs of his own dominions, the situation of the Christians in Palestine was becoming hourly more hopeless; and the violent indignation of Honorius was excited by his neglect to redeem the pledge which he had given before his coronation. The pope vainly urged him both with entreaties and threats, and finally laboured to enlist his ambition in the cause,

CHAP. III. PART I.

by obtaining for him the hand of Violante, daughter of John de Brienne titular king of Jerusalem, who consented to transfer his nominal crown to his future son in law. Frederic accordingly espoused the princess, and from this period not only dispatched succours to Palestine, but prepared to follow himself with a fleet and army. Two years were passed in the equipment of this force; crusaders assembled from England, Germany, and Italy, to await the sailing of the expedition; and the emperor at length embarked at Brundusium. But the burning climate of Apulia and Calabria had produced a destructive epidemic among the northern foreigners; the contagion carried off immense numbers of them, the remnant were dispirited and Frederic, being himself attacked by the pestilence, was compelled to disembark and postpone the crusade.

1225

1227

The intelligence of this delay filled Gregory IX., who had just succeeded to Honorius, with disappointment and fury; and he immediately thundered an excommunication against the emperor. Frederic on his part contented himself with defending his conduct by circular letters to the princes of Christendom, and proving his sincerity by the activity of his preparations for the sacred expedition which he still meditated. In the following summer he sailed for Palestine, though with a diminished army, and, arriving at St. Jean d'Acre, commenced his operations. But the arrogant pope viewed it as a new offence that he had presumed to enter on so holy an enterprise

under the sentence of an excommunication, and, reiterating his fulminations, he not only thwarted the progress of the imperial arms in Palestine by the intrigues of his ministers, but preached a crusade against Frederic, and sent John de Brienne with an army of papal partizans to ravage the Neapolitan dominions. Notwithstanding the hostility and artifices of the pope, the energy and prudence of Frederic gained more for the Christians of Palestine than any prince had effected since the foundation of the Latin kingdoms. His arms obtained from the weakness of the Saracens the cession of Jerusalem; and in that city he placed on his own head the crown of his new kingdom, with which no priest could be induced to invest him. * 1229

Return of Frederic to Europe. Papal intrigues.

His hasty return to Europe after this ceremony struck terror into his enemies. The papal army disbanded at his approach, the senate and people of Rome espoused his cause against their pontiff, and Gregory was compelled to conclude a hollow reconciliation with the man whom he detested. The tranquil obedience of Germany and of the 1230

* Mr. Mills has justly remarked that "if the pope had not hated Frederic worse than his Holiness hated the Saracens, and thereby caused his return to Europe, there is every probability that the emperor would have brought matters to an issue completely triumphant." Crusades, vol. ii. p. 201. Mr. Mills, who has told the story of Frederic's proceedings in Palestine with his usual happiness, has, I observe, principally gathered his materials from the contemporary chronicle of Richard de S. Germano—(See the seventh volume of Scriptores Rer. Ital.)

CHAP. III. PART I.

Two Sicilies, rendered Frederic a formidable enemy; his Saracen subjects, whom he had seated almost at the gates of Rome, were not likely to be restrained by conscientious scruples from attacking the head of the church at the command of their master; and, among the inhabitants of the ecclesiastical capital itself and of all the Italian provinces, there were numerous imperial adherents. The situation of Gregory was therefore extremely critical, but he found a formidable support in northern Italy, and he dissembled no longer than was necessary for the maturity of his plots against Frederic. The inveterate hostility which the Milanese cherished towards the Swabian family had produced from them, some years before, a refusal to invest the emperor with the ancient Lombard crown which they preserved at Monza; and their fears of his vengeance for this insult had occasioned the revival of the old league of Lombardy against the empire. While the emperor was preparing for his expedition to Palestine, the Milanese induced the Guelf cities of Lombardy to renew the terms of the association in which the ambition of Barbarossa had united them sixty years before; and the confederation was joined by Turin, Vercelli, the republics of the Trevisan March, and Bologna: which last city had now grown powerful by increased population, and eminent by the fame of its celebrated university. The league of Lombardy was included by the pope in his short lived pacification with the empire.

Renewal of the League of Lombardy. 1226

While the papal intrigues were cherishing the seeds of war, a singular spectacle of an opposite nature was exhibited in northern Italy. Some members of the newly established order of Dominician friars employed all the powers of eloquence over a half civilized age in exhortations of universal peace; and the preaching of one of these brethren had an astonishing but transient influence upon the ardent temperament of the Italian people. At Bologna, Padua, Verona, and the surrounding cities, Giovanni di Vicenza began, three years after the pacification of 1230, to denounce the iniquity of war and to inculcate the general forgiveness of injuries. He was heard with veneration and humility. At his voice the feuds of generations were hushed, vows of reconciliation were poured forth by the bitterest enemies, and he was entreated by contending cities and factions to reform their governments and compose their differences. So absolute became his influence, that a general assembly was convened on the plain of Paquara upon the banks of the Adige for the establishment of perpetual peace; and the Guelf and Ghibelin cities and castles of Lombardy were emptied of their population at the summons of the preacher. By this immense concourse an universal amnesty and oblivion of mutual wrongs was declared at his suggestion, and Giovanni became the arbitrary master of political consciences. But he had not virtue and disinterestedness to support the office which he had assumed—if indeed it had ever been

Singular power of a Dominician friar.

CHAP. III. PART I.

possible to support it. He aspired at becoming the temporal as well as the spiritual director of his flock: he grossly abused his authority, and the people of Vicenza, awaking from the dreams of enthusiasm, shook off his strange yoke, and
1233 consigned the pseudo-apostle of peace to a captivity from whence he escaped only with the entire loss of his ephemeral reputation.

War between the emperor and the Lombard league.

In less than two years after this extraordinary ebullition of religious sentiment, the whole of Lombardy was in arms. Henry, the son of the emperor by his first marriage, had revolted against
1234 him in Germany; the pope is accused of having encouraged this unnatural rebellion; and the Lombard league had promised the young prince their support. But the appearance of Frederic in Germany was sufficient to confirm the fidelity of his nobles, his son was compelled to sue for mercy, and the relentless severity of the offended parent, or the repeated machinations of Henry, doomed him to an imprisonment for life. The conduct of the Lombard league might justly excite the anger of Frederic, and his desire of vengeance was fomented by the passions of the Ghibelin party. In the Trevisan March the family of Romano were still the chiefs of this faction. Eccelino II. had retired into a monastery, but his power had devolved upon his two sons, Alberic and Eccelino III. The latter, the scourge of his age and country, had with the aid of a Ghibelin faction in Verona established him-
1236 self in the sovereignty of that city; and Cremona

and other Lombard republics of the same party formed an alliance with him against the Guelf league. The return of the emperor to Italy at the head of his German cavalry was the signal for hostilities. Eccelino and the Ghibelins united under the imperial standard, the Guelf cities were firm in their association, and for years the fairest portion of Italy was filled with bloodshed and rapine.

The first Lombard league against Frederic Barbarossa had been ennobled by every principle which could actuate a suffering and courageous people, and the purity of their cause had been rewarded by a glorious triumph. The second Lombard league was different in its character and results. It had been provoked by no injuries, and was dictated rather by selfish ambition than the generous spirit of freedom: the contest was not for liberty, but the indulgence of party hatred, not of the oppressed against the oppressor, but of two rancorous and equally culpable factions. The interests of the church and of the empire were the pretence, the animosity of the Guelfs and Ghibelins the real spring of action.

Extinction of freedom in the Trevisan March.

Except in their pernicious influence upon the liberties of the cities, these long wars are marked by few vicissitudes of interest. In 1208 Ferrara, or rather the Guelf faction which then preponderated within that city, had set a fatal example to the rest of Italy by choosing the marquis Azzo VI. of Este for the signor or lord of the republic: by the similar triumph of the opposite party in

CHAP. III. PART I.

Verona, Eccelino III. da Romano, under the new title of captain of the people, now enjoyed supreme authority within its walls; and, in the first years of the Lombard war, after these ominous precedents a second city of importance fell under his dominion. Padua had been distinguished in the Trevisan March by attachment to the Guelf cause; but the revolution of factions threw her government into the hands of some of the nobles who were Ghibelin, and these men, after making vain stipulations for their liberties, declared the adherence of the republic to the imperial party, and allowed Eccelino, as the lieutenant of Frederic, to enter the place. That active and treacherous partizan had no sooner passed the gates than, under pretence of guarding the Ghibelin interests, he established his own despotic authority, and Padua groaned for many years beneath a horrible tyranny. By different arts Eccelino entrapped into his grasp the most illustrious citizens even among the Ghibelin party, and threw them into the dungeons of his own castles. Many of the Paduan nobles fled from the city, and their houses were immediately razed; others were dragged to the scaffold by the jealous tyrant; and many of the burghers of humbler fortunes were inhumanly consigned to the flames on the mere suspicion of attachment to freedom. While Ferrara had voluntarily surrendered her rights to the house of Este, and Verona and Padua were subject to Eccelino, Treviso was governed by his brother Alberic da Romano, and Vicenza—being surprised by the imperial troops

in the first campaign—had equally lost her freedom. The liberties of the Trevisan March had thus faded for ever, and from this epoch the cities of the province might change their masters, but they never recovered their independence.

The degradation of the Lombard republics was longer deferred than the slavery of the Trevisan cities; and their ruin more silently prepared by the spirit of partizanship which, in the conflict of rival factions, habituated every citizen in ready obedience to a Guelf or Ghibelin chief. The events of the war between the Lombard league and the empire were, when taken together, wholly indecisive. After the success of Frederic against Vicenza, the affairs of Germany demanded his presence, and Eccelino was entrusted with the direction of his Italian interests; but in the following year the emperor recrossed the Alps with two thousand German cavalry, and being joined by ten thousand of his Neapolitan Saracens, and the forces of the Ghibelin party, won a great battle, 1237 at Corte-Nuova in Lombardy, over the Milanese and the troops of the other Guelf cities. The podestá of Milan fell into the power of the conqueror, and Frederic also numbered the carroccio of that republic among the trophies of his brilliant victory; but the result afforded him few solid advantages, and was balanced in the next summer by his unsuccessful siege of Brescia, a city of the league, which was long and courageously defended against him until he was finally compelled to abandon the enterprise.

CHAP. III. PART I.

Papal persecution of Frederic II.

While the progress of the war in Lombardy was thus checquered by alternate fortune, a more formidable enemy than any of the republican states had openly declared against the emperor. Gregory IX. renovated the courage of the Guelf league of Lombardy by avowing himself its protector; and he soon after this act took occasion
1239 to excommunicate Frederic. The spiritual censures of the pontiff might be regarded by the emperor with contempt or indifference in their personal application to himself: but they were of eminent disservice to his cause. His zealous partizans, whose understandings were strong or whose passions had been violently heated in the conflict, were indeed unshaken by the artillery of the church, but with the superstitious and the lukewarm the case was far otherwise. The anathemas of Gregory palsied the timid, determined the wavering, and encouraged the disaffected. The subjects of the emperor were absolved from their allegiance and encouraged to revolt, and in the following year the pope even declared a crusade against him for the defence of the church, as if he had been the common enemy of Christendom. But Frederic took a summary vengeance on the disciples of fanaticism by putting to death every prisoner who bore the cross, and the sacred emblem was no longer prostituted in so unholy a service. But the implacable Gregory was not the less resolved on the ruin of his enemy. He convoked a general council to meet in the Lateran, and Frederic foresaw that, if the authority of

the pope over the assembled prelates should obtain from the united voice of the church a confirmation of the ecclesiastical sentence against him, defection would be multiplied in his party. He therefore employed all the vessels which he could equip in the Sicilies to oppose the passage of the French clergy by sea to Rome. Genoa, on the other hand, sent her fleet to transport those prelates who embarked for the Italian shores, but Pisa united her naval force to the imperial gallies to intercept their voyage. Near the little island of Meloria—the future scene of a more interesting combat—the hostile squadrons came to an encounter, and the Genoese were utterly defeated. 1241
So immense a quantity of specie fell into the hands of the victors that it is said to have been shared between the imperialists and the Pisans by a wooden measure; and the captive prelates being conveyed to Pisa were loaded, by a curious contradiction of respect and rigour, with silver chains.

The mortification with which this disaster overwhelmed the aged pontiff was supposed to have hastened the close of his days. He died within a few months; and two years elapsed before the intrigues of the conclave would suffer that assembly to agree in the choice of a successor. But when the new pope, Innocent IV., had assumed the tiara, the emperor found that his victory had only suspended, not suppressed, the rancorous hostility of the church. Innocent secretly repairing to Genoa passed from thence into France, and, summoning a general council at Lyons, Council of Lyons. Sentence of de-

CHAP. III. PART I.

position against the emperor. 1245

which was attended by the bishops of England, France, and Spain, with a few of those of Germany and Italy, solemnly proposed the resolution that Frederic should be deprived of his crowns. The emperor condescended to defend himself by his ambassadors; but the council were subservient to the pope, and Innocent, in presence of one hundred and forty bishops, but without collecting their suffrages, deprived the emperor of all his dignities, and absolved his subjects from their oaths of allegiance.

This has been justly termed the most pompous act of usurpation in the records of the Romish church: since the tacit approbation of a general council seemed to realize all the audacious vaunts of the papal dominion over the powers of the earth which had distinguished the pontificates of Gregory VII. and Innocent III. After his first burst of just indignation at this unprincipled persecution, the emperor, oppressed with grief and alarm at the defection of many of his friends, submitted to the vain humiliation of soliciting the pardon of Innocent. But the papal tyrant was inexorable, and Frederic, rouzed to the natural vigour of his character, soon placed himself in an attitude to defy both his ancient enemies and his revolted adherents. The event proved that neither the intrigues of Innocent, and the countenance which he at least gave to atrocious projects for the assassination of the emperor, nor yet the support which his decrees had received from an obsequious council, possessed power to endanger

Unshaken power of Frederic.

the throne of Frederic II. For the five remaining years of that monarch's reign, the struggle between the papal and imperial parties—or rather between Guelf and Ghibelin interests—was obstinately maintained: and Frederic closed a troubled and eventful life without any memorable reverse of fortune. He died of dysentery, at his castle of Ferentino in the Capitanate of Naples, in the fifty-sixth year of his age, after a turbulent reign of thirty-one years over the empire, thirty-eight over Germany, and fifty-two as king of the Sicilies.

His death. 1250

Frederic II. was endowed with many noble and eminent qualities: his talents were unquestionably of the highest order; he was valiant and active, munificent and courteous. His own mental acquirements and tastes were far from contemptible: he was thoroughly acquainted with the philosophy (such as it was) of his times, and was a zealous patron of learned men and an enlightened encourager of institutions for the revival of letters. He spoke various languages, and, himself a poet, was one of the earliest cultivators of that melodious corruption of the Latin which first became in his days the written language of Italy. In the internal government of his dominions he shewed himself a wise and just monarch; and, if his administration was rigorous, it was also equable and prudent. Such was the fair side of his character: but the demoralizing influence of education and of the atrocious scenes into which he was thrown cast darker shades over a high-minded and gene-

Character of Frederic II.

CHAP. III. PART I.

rous nature. His private life was sullied by licentious pleasures; his conduct in the Lombard wars was sometimes stained by the cruel spirit of his age; and the reproach of excessive dissimulation cannot be removed from many of his actions. But he had unhappily been nursed in the faithless policy of the Roman See, he was profoundly acquainted with the treacherous designs of the pontiffs, and the corruption of early example might dictate the employment in self-defence of the same weapons which were unhesitatingly used for his destruction. His vices may be explained, though they cannot be palliated, by the superior wickedness of his papal tutors and adversaries. *

* Muratori, Annali A. D. 1216—1250. Sismondi, vols. ii. pp. 416. ad fin. and iii. pp. 1—119. Hallam, vol. i. pp. 368—397. I am also indebted to the 16th book of Giannone in compiling this abstract of the reign of Frederic II.

PART II.

Conrad IV. Son of Frederic II.—His Reign over the Sicilies, and Death—Papal Invasion of the Sicilies—Internal State of Rome—The Senator Brancaleone—Cruelties of Eccelino da Romano—Crusade against Eccelino—Fall and Death of the Tyrant—Fall of the Lombard Republics—Changes in the Military Art—Manfred, King of the Sicilies—Projects of the Popes against him—Invasion of the Sicilies by Charles of Anjou—Battle of Grandella—Death of Manfred—Charles of Anjou, King of the Sicilies—Enterprise and Execution of Conradin—Extinction of the House of Swabia.

INNOCENT IV., in the asylum which he had chosen for himself at Lyons, welcomed the intelligence of the death of Frederic II. with open rejoicings, and immediately prepared to avail himself of the total change in the posture of affairs which that event had occasioned. He returned to Italy, and, visiting in succession all the great Guelf cities of Lombardy, was every where received with splendid state and greeted with the triumphal acclamations of his party. The Ghibelins on the other hand were overwhelmed with consternation at the loss of their heroic chief; and in the first moment of depression they almost universally solicited peace. The appearance, however, in Italy of the representative of the Swabian family revived their drooping courage. This was Conrad IV., the eldest of the two surviving legitimate

Conrad IV.

CHAP. III. PART II.

sons of Frederic, who had been crowned king of Germany during his father's life time, and for several years entrusted with the government of that country; and who, being appointed by the emperor's will his successor in all the dominions of his house, crossed the Alps with a numerous army to assert his Italian rights, while Innocent IV. was yet making his progress through Lombardy.

1251

His reign over the Sicilies.

Though Conrad was strengthened on his arrival in the Trevisan March by the support of Eccelino da Romano and the Ghibelins, the confederated Guelfs in northern and central Italy were so powerful that he judged it most prudent to avoid a contest with them, and to proceed at once by water from the head of the Adriatic gulf to the coasts of Naples. Innocent, pretending that by the deposition of Frederic II. the Sicilies had reverted as a forfeited fief to the papal see, had on the emperor's death declared his intention of placing that kingdom under his immediate government. The dread of incurring the sentences of excommunication and interdict by resistance to the papal pretensions, and the machinations of the mendicant friars—the devoted militia of the pontiffs—had occasioned a dangerous revolt in the Neapolitan dominions against the Swabian government. The capital and most of the great towns rose in open rebellion, and the insurrection became nearly general. But the courage and active talents of the youthful Manfred prince of Tarento, one of the illegitimate sons of Frederic II., who was regent of the kingdom for his brother

Conrad, quickly reduced most of the revolted provinces and cities to obedience; and the debarkation of the new king and his army was almost immediately followed by the complete establishment of his authority. CHAP. III. PART II. 1253

The pope now discovered that the unassisted powers of the church, however formidable, were insufficient for the conquest and preservation of the kingdom of the Sicilies; and since he could not hope to retain their crown as an immediate appendage of the Roman See, he sought to bestow it upon some prince who would hold the gift as a faithful vassal of the papacy. To this policy of Innocent IV. may be traced the introduction of a French dynasty into Naples, and the origin of those cruel wars which were to devastate Italy for successive centuries with the contentions of foreigners.

The first views of Innocent were directed to the English court, and Richard earl of Cornwall the brother, and Edmond the son of our Henry III. were both the objects of negociations which were diverted by the offer of Charles, count of Provence and Anjou, brother of Louis IX. of France, to place his person and the resources of his great inheritance at the disposal of the church in exchange for the Sicilian diadem. But, just at this period, the sudden death of Conrad, at the early age of twenty-six years, revived the hopes of Innocent that the Sicilies might yet be annexed to the popedom, and he immediately

Death of Conrad. 1254

CHAP. III. PART II.

broke off his intrigues for foreign aid. Conrad had left an infant son, Conradin, in Germany; and it appeared easy to the father of Christendom to seize the inheritance of the orphan. This child was the sole legitimate survivor of the family of Frederic II.,* but there remained in Manfred a worthy inheritor of the unyielding valour and splendid abilities of that monarch.

Papal invasion of the Sicilies.

While the papal partizans excited commotions in the Sicilies, Innocent himself assembled an army among the Guelf republics of Lombardy and Tuscany, and advanced into the Neapolitan provinces. Manfred, who had been induced to assume the reins of government for his infant nephew, could at first offer no resistance to the invader, and adopted the ineffectual policy of professing to regard him as the protector of Conradin; but when the pope required all the barons of the kingdom to take an oath of allegiance to

* Besides several natural children, Frederic II. had altogether three legitimate sons: Henry, who did not survive him, but closed his life in confinement; Conrad IV.; and a second Henry, who died in 1253. The propagation of atrocious calumnies against the Swabian family was a favorite measure of policy with the popes and their creatures: Frederic II. was accused of having murdered his two grandsons, children of the elder Henry; Manfred of having smothered his father, Frederic; Conrad of poisoning the younger Henry; and, finally, Manfred again of the same crime against Conrad: and all this apparently without a shadow of probability in any one of these instances. The death of Conrad is said, by more than one contemporary, to have been hastened by the effect which the malignant aspersions of the court of Rome produced upon his sensitive spirit.

the Holy See, and at once exacted the same fealty from Manfred and deprived him of a part of his fiefs to enrich one of his own creatures, that prince perceived that no alternative remained between the surrender of his rights and those of his house, and a courageous resistance. He withdrew from the destruction which threatened him to seek an asylum among the Saracens at Luceria, the faithful subjects of his father. He was received with transports of affection; the German soldiery of Conrad ranged themselves under his standard; his force daily increased; and he was soon in a condition to oblige the papal army to seek a shelter within the walls of Naples.

While the spirit of the Swabian adherents was animated by his success, and the popular affection and confidence were gained by his talents and chivalrous gallantry, the death of Innocent at Naples at this critical juncture struck a panic into the Guelf party. The papal forces were every where defeated, the friends of Manfred declared themselves in all quarters, Naples and Capua opened their gates to him, and, in less than two years after the decease of Innocent IV., the whole kingdom of the Sicilies was cleared of enemies, and placed under his tranquil government as regent for the infant Conradin. *

Internal state of Rome.

The pontificate of Innocent IV. was a splendid æra of ecclesiastical power; but while the Swa-

* Giannone lib. xviii. Muratori, Annali, A.D. 1250—1254. Sismondi, vol. iii. pp. 121—159.

CHAP. III. PART II.

bian princes were combated and oppressed by the ambition and relentless hatred of that pope, his authority was openly set at defiance in the seat of the papacy itself. The turbulent independence of Rome, under the greatest pontiffs of the thirteenth century, presented a curious contradiction to the gigantic tyranny which they exercised beyond the limits of their see. Notwithstanding the cruel fate of Arnold of Brescia, the republican constitution, which had been established under his auspices in the middle of the twelfth century, long continued unshaken. Rome was divided into thirteen quarters termed *Rioni;* the citizens in each of these subdivisions annually named ten delegates; and the electoral body thus composed appointed a senate of fifty-six members. In these representatives of the Roman people—sometimes, perhaps, under the presidency of a patrician or prefect—the government of the city was vested for nearly half a century. But in Rome, as in the other great cities of Italy, the feeble administration of a numerous and often divided assembly was utterly incompetent to restrain the lawless and turbulent spirit of the age. The Roman populace were at once fickle and bloodthirsty, and the nobles were even more tyrannical and licentious than the aristocracy of the Trevisan March. The ruined monuments of the ancient grandeur of Rome were converted by the barons into formidable strong holds from which, in the prosecution of their feuds, or in enterprises of public rob-

bery, they audaciously sallied forth to fill the city with bloodshed and rapine. *

The same causes which had induced the citizens of the other republics, soon after the peace of Constance, to seek relief in the dictatorial authority of a foreign magistrate from the frightful disorders to which they were constantly exposed, actuated the Romans: and, in 1192, they superseded the functions of their senate by the appointment of a single senator, who differed only from a podestá in name. A distinguished individual of some Italian city was annually selected for this arduous office of government, and established in the palace which the senate had occupied in the capitol. The same spirit of independence, which forbade the Romans to subject their senate to the control of the popes, was preserved under the new administration; and, though the vigorous and artful character of Innocent III. obtained during his reign a general recognition of the temporal superiority of the popedom, the senator was the efficient representative of the Roman republic. The immediate successors of Innocent III. did not enjoy even the moderate influence which he had acquired; and Gregory IX. could with difficulty procure an exemption for his ecclesiastical officers and court from the jurisdiction of the senator.

* "Behold," says Petrarch, "the relics of Rome, the image of her pristine greatness. Neither time nor the barbarian can boast the merit of this stupendous destruction: it was perpetrated by her own citizens, by the most illustrious of her sons, and they have done with the battering ram what the Punic hero could not accomplish with the sword."

CHAP. III. PART II.

The senator Brancaleone.

The temporary removal of Innocent IV. to Lyons seemed to destroy even the appearance of papal influence within the walls of Rome, and the horrible excesses of the Roman nobles became at this period so intolerable, that no other resource remained to the miserable citizens than to confide the absolute disposal of their lives and fortunes to some foreign magistrate of undoubted integrity and impartial rigour. They selected for their senator a Bolognese noble, the famous Brancaleone d'Andalo, whose administration has been celebrated by the pen of one of the greatest of our historians. The character of Brancaleone was perfectly adapted to the office, which he only
1253 accepted after requiring that thirty Roman hostages of distinction should remain at Bologna, as his security against the notorious inconstancy of the people whom he was called to govern. His courage and firmness were unbounded; as a magistrate he was active, just, and upright; and the inflexible severity of his temper was both strengthened and regulated by the honorable anxiety of a virtuous reputation. The most powerful offenders were not spared by his vigorous arm. No crime against the public peace escaped his vigilance. At the head of the citizens he attacked the fortresses of the nobles who habitually outraged the civil authority, and in the course of his government one hundred and forty of these domestic citadels were razed, and many of their proprietors previously hanged on their own towers. By such tremendous examples the public order and happi-

ness of Rome were completely established; the arms of the republic were successfully employed in the field in reducing to obedience the surrounding territory; and even Innocent III., on his return to Italy and before his expedition against Naples, was compelled by the threats and at the command of the Roman people to remove from his residence in one of the neighbouring towns within the walls of his proper see: where he was however honorably received by Brancaleone.

The eminent services of the great senator were rewarded with ingratitude by the people who were unworthy of the blessings which his firmness had procured for them: a revolt was excited against him by the arts of the nobles whose tyranny he had destroyed, and of pope Alexander IV., the successor of Innocent, who could not pardon the humiliation of the See. Brancaleone was deposed and imprisoned, and his life would have been sacrificed to the vengeance of his enemies, if the Bolognese had not retained their hostages, and in the cause of their illustrious citizen withstood the terrors of a papal interdict. He was released from confinement, and the Romans, enjoying full leisure in the renewal of disorders to reproach themselves with their conduct towards him, besought his return to their city with repentant entreaties. For the short residue of his life his government was vigorous and fortunate; the pope was compelled to submission; and, though the enemies of order and of the senatorial authority were executed with too revengeful a

CHAP. III. PART II.

spirit, the citizens deplored the death of their protector with well merited tributes to his memory. *

1258 Cruelties of Eccelino da Romano.

The pontificate of Alexander IV. was distinguished by a more justifiable and honorable, if not a more disinterested project, than the persecution of Brancaleone. On the death of Frederic II., Eccelino III. da Romano cemented his horrible tyranny over Verona, Padua, and other cities of the Trevisan March, into an absolute and independent sovereignty. Secure in the power which no superior remained to control, he rioted in the indulgence of the cruelty in which he was atrociously pre-eminent. There is scarcely another example in European history of the endurance of mankind under so long and sanguinary a career of government; nor of a character of such unmingled and wanton ferocity as his. Power seemed in him to be no otherwise an object than as it might minister to the gratification of his master passion of demoniacal atrocity. Insensible to the attractions of woman, the sexes were equally his victims, and age and infancy alike the sport of torture and murder. His crimes would be incredible if they were not remarkably well authenticated by the agreement of all contemporary writers, and they excited universal horror even in an age when inhumanity towards enemies was almost

* This brief sketch of the internal state of Rome in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries is partly drawn from Muratori and Sismondi, and partly from Gibbon, whose sixty-ninth chapter contains incomparably the most satisfactory account-

too common to be a reproach. By day and by night, in the cities under his sway, the air rang with the agonizing shrieks of the wretched sufferers who were expiring under the dreadful variety of torture. All that was distinguished in the Trevisan March for public virtue, for birth, station, or wealth, even for private qualities or personal beauty, fell under the suspicion and hatred of the gloomy tyrant. A silent and fearful submission reigned through his dominions; resistance to his numerous satellites was hopeless, and flight impossible.

Crusade against Eccelino. 1255

In the second year of his pontificate, Alexander IV. animated the indignation of mankind by preaching a crusade against this enemy of the human race. The cause was truly a sacred one, and it had been well if worldly hostility had never been worse directed under the sanction of religion. Yet, such was the selfishness of Italian faction, that the war was at first undertaken only by Guelf animosity, and the monster found puissant allies in the Ghibelin name. Under the command of the papal legate, the Guelf cities of northern and central Italy united their forces with those of the marquis of Este, and other nobles of the same party in the Trevisan March; and the whole of the Paduan exiles, with many of the Venetians, assuming the cross, swelled the numbers of the army.

Eccelino, strengthened by Ghibelin aid, was equal to his enemies in numerical force, and infinitely superior in activity and skill. The legate

CHAP. III. PART II.

proved himself wretchedly incompetent in the conduct of the war; but a fortunate accident in the first campaign gave the possession of Padua
1256 to the crusaders, in the absence of Eccelino who was ravaging the Mantuan territory with fire and sword. The numerous and crowded prisons of Padua were thrown open, and among the miserable captives, many of whom had been mutilated by torture, were found aged persons of both sexes and delicate young females, all bowed down with privation and suffering: but it was at the appearance of crowds of helpless children, whom the fiend had deprived of their eyes, that horror and pity most agitated the shuddering spectators. * Eccelino had not yet inflicted the last calamity of his reign on the unhappy Paduans. Eleven thousand of the flower of the citizens were serving in his army when the city was taken: they composed a third of his troops, and he could place no dependance upon their fidelity. Dexterously therefore disarming them in succession, he threw the whole number into prisons, and, when famine and massacre and the sword of the executioner had done their office, no more than two hundred of the victims survived.

Notwithstanding the loss of Padua, the power and abilities of Eccelino enabled him with the aid of his allies to support the war for two years, and
1258 finally even to rout and disperse the crusading army. This victory was followed by the subjec-

* This tale will bring to the reader's mind a most beautiful scene in Mr. Beckford's Vathek.

tion of Brescia, where the Ghibelin faction acquiring the ascendancy opened their gates to Eccelino. But this was the last material success of the tyrant, and his fall was prepared by that perfidy in his nature which he could not refrain from indulging, even towards his friends. The Ghibelin nobles who had hitherto supported him endured with shame the reproach of his enormities, and the discovery of his treacherous designs against themselves, soon after the capture of Brescia, completed their disgust and alienation. They united with the Guelf confederation by a treaty, in which the contracting parties solemnly swore that no consideration should turn them aside from the destruction of the inhuman and faithless Eccelino.

Fall and death of the tyrant.

Their purpose was shortly consummated. Eccelino made vigorous efforts in the field, but his enemies were now every where superior, and near Cassano their armies enclosed the monster in the toils. Defection began to spread in his ranks, and, forsaken by his myrmidons, furious with desperation, and covered with wounds, he fell into the hands of the confederates. In captivity he preserved an obdurate silence; he repulsed all surgical aid, tore open his wounds, and died in a 1259
few days, after a reign of blood and terror which had lasted without intermission for twenty-four years. The death of Eccelino seemed an imperfect expiation for so many crimes: his brother Alberic da Romano shared several features of his character, and the confederates sternly resolved to spare no individual of so detested a race. Not

CHAP. III. PART II.

only Alberic, but his wife, six sons, and two daughters were all mercilessly pursued and executed: for it was in the barbarous spirit of Italian hatred to confound the innocent with the guilty. *

Fall of the Lombard republics.

In the internal discords of the Lombard cities, the rise of factions, the struggle between the noble and plebeian orders, and the habit of submission to the government of a single magistrate, we have endeavoured to trace the decline of that generous spirit of freedom, which renders these republics the most interesting objects in early Italian history. We are now arrived at the period of their fall. In the Trevisan March, the destruction of the family of Romano only occasioned a transition of the yoke, and gave place for the dominion of other noble houses, of which those of Este at Ferrara, and Della Scala at Verona, were the most distinguished. In the cities of Lombardy about the same epoch, a despotic authority was in like manner yielded to *signores* or lords, and the possession of sovereignty in that great province was almost exclusively divided between the families Della Torre and of Pelavicino. At Milan the dissentions between the nobles and plebeians had attained an irreconcileable violence, and produced a furious
1257 civil war, in which the ambition of Martino della

* Muratori, Annali, A. D. 1255—1259. Sismondi, vol. iii. pp. 185—215. The life of Eccelino was dramatised by Albertino Mussato, a Paduan, and contemporary with Dante. It would have been well for Italian genius if succeeding dramatists of Italy had followed this example, and not lost the power of original composition in the servile imitation of the Greek tragedians.

Torre placed him, though a noble, at the head of the popular party. After some fluctuations of success, the aristocracy were expelled and completely worsted, and Martino reigned over the state as lord and captain of the people. 1259

The empty forms of a republic might still be retained, but when once the blind favor of the democracy had chosen an aspiring and talented leader for their protection, they were easily induced to renew the distinction in his family. Five of the Torriani were successively entrusted with the supreme and unlimited direction of affairs; their fortune was enjoyed with moderation; and the people gradually forgot their independence in continued obedience to an absolute chief. The example of the greatest state of Lombardy was followed by smaller communities: the democracies of Lodi, Novara, Como, Vercelli, and Bergamo, had all in a few years sought protection from their nobles under the dominion of the Torriani. The marquis of Pelavicino, the head of the Ghibelin faction of Cremona had, as such, long enjoyed in effect the signiory of that city; and his alliance with Martino della Torre and his first successor, though it was not lasting, enabled him to extend his influence over almost every part of Lombardy which was not possessed by the lords of Milan.

Changes in the military art.

A gradual and silent change in the mode of warfare, which had been perfected before the middle of the thirteenth century, has been sometimes cited as one of the causes which hastened the overthrow of the Lombard liberties. It might,

CHAP. III. PART II.

perhaps, be more correctly numbered among the circumstances which, after that overthrow had been accomplished, perpetuated the work of slavery. In the Italian wars of the eleventh and twelfth centuries, the armies of the free states were principally composed of infantry. Every citizen was habituated to the use of arms, and the burgher militia was a general levy of the brave and hardy population. The nobles fought on horseback, but their numbers were comparatively small, and neither their offensive weapons nor their imperfect armour differed much from those of the foot-soldier. And even the feudal levies of Germany, employed by Frederic Barbarossa in his Lombard wars, were for the most part of infantry and similarly equipped. The pride of nobility, and the effects of an education and life exclusively devoted to military exercises, of course rendered the highborn knight more martial in character, and more skilful in the management of arms, than the industrious artisan; but the ruder courage of freemen did not yield before the spirit of more practiced warriors, and as long as the armour of the knight and of the burgher foot-soldier was similar, the superiority of the noble chivalry was not severely felt.

But when, in the course of the twelfth century, such improvements had been introduced in the quality of defensive armour as rendered the mounted knight almost invulnerable in every part of his frame, the aspect of war was altogether changed. The well tempered coat of mail— a

double net work of iron rings, or a covering of iron scales sown on leather—enclosed the whole body. The steel helmet with its barred vizor protected the head and face; and the throat, breast, arms, and legs were farther guarded by the gorget, cuirass, brasses, and cuisses of solid steel. Not only the warrior himself, but his destrier or war-horse was clothed in iron; and the foot-soldier could no longer contend for an instant with the knight whose armour of proof resisted the sword and turned aside the shaft of the cross bow, whose horse was equally protected from missiles, and whose long and weighty lance inflicted death before a combatant less heavily armed could close with him. A body of five hundred gens-d'armerie or *lances*, as the mounted gentlemen were termed, might in firm and compact order charge without danger any number, however immense, of footmen whose weapons could not penetrate their armour, and who wanted discipline to oppose the weight of the phalanx to their hostile shock. The republican citizens found themselves perfectly defenceless as often as they attempted to encounter the chivalry of the nobles in the field, and no change of equipment could remove their inferiority; since the practice of enduring without fatigue the ponderous burthen of knightly armour, the skilful management of the warhorse, and the exercise of the unwieldy lance, were all alike foreign to their industrious and peaceful habits, and could be acquired only by men whose sole occupation and pleasure were war.

CHAP. III. PART II.

In the middle of the thirteenth century, experience had thrown the burgher infantry into contempt; armies came to be numbered only by the force of their mounted lancers; cavalry could be no otherwise successfully opposed than by cavalry; and the Lombard states, feeling the weakness of their native militia, whose courage could not preserve them from unresisted slaughter, were compelled to take into pay bodies of lancers composed of gentlemen, who under some great noble served for extravagant stipends. The liberties of the republics had already expired before this practice was adopted; but when the defence of the state was once placed in a foreign cavalry, and the citizens had withdrawn from the use of weapons which they found ineffectual, it was easy for a tyrant to uphold his reign by the lances of hired adventurers, and to perpetuate the yoke on a people, who had abandoned the practice of arms and the public defence, to rapacious and insolent mercenaries. *

Manfred, king of the Sicilies.

During the pontificate of Alexander IV., the kingdom of the Sicilies had been entirely freed from the papal invasion by the talents of Manfred; and though that heroic prince at first governed only as regent for his infant nephew, he was seduced by ambition to assume the crown on the circulation of a rumour of the death of Conradin which he had probably himself set afloat. As soon as his coronation was known in Germany,

1258

* Sismondi, vol. iii. pp. 245—274.

the widow of Conrad IV. remonstrated by her ambassadors in the name of her son against this usurpation. Manfred refused to descend from the throne which his arm had conquered from the popes, and on which the affection of his subjects had placed him; but having no male offspring he publicly declared that he reserved the succession of his dominions for Conradin. The German guardians of the young prince were compelled to accept the compact, and the new king was no farther disturbed by the pretensions of his nephew. But he was still pursued by the hostility of the popedom. On the death of Alexander IV., who survived the consummation of the crusade against Eccelino da Romano only two years, his successor Urban IV. adopted the policy and displayed the vigour of Innocent IV. Animated by that hatred and fear of the Swabian house which had become an heirloom of the papacy, Urban renewed the negociation with Charles count of Anjou and Provence which Innocent had broken off. Upon condition of feudal allegiance and payment of an annual tribute to the Holy See, Urban bestowed upon Charles the investiture of the kingdom of the Sicilies, which the disobedience and crimes of Frederic II. and his sons were declared to have forfeited. It was the custom with the popes to prostitute upon all occasions the sacred cause of religion to the interests of their see; and Urban converted the intended war against Manfred into a crusade, in which

Projects of the popes against him.

CHAP. III. PART II.

great numbers of the restless nobility of France embarked.

Manfred prepared for the storm that menaced him with the resolution and ability which belonged to his character. He strengthened his connection with the Italian Ghibelins, harassed the papal adherents, and endeavoured to assemble a sufficient force in Lombardy in conjunction with his ally, the marquis of Pelavicino, to close the passage into Italy against the French, while the Pisans held the seas with their gallies in his cause. The impetuosity of Charles of Anjou induced him, attended by a thousand cavaliers, to hazard the voyage from Marseilles to Rome with a small fleet, while his army was assembling in France; and he was fortunate enough to elude
1265 the republican squadron in a storm. He disembarked at the head of his slender force and entered Rome, where he was some months after joined by his formidable army, which had defeated Pelavicino and cleared a route through Lombardy.

Invasion of the Sicilies by Charles of Anjou.

In the midst of these preparations for war, Urban IV. had died in the year before the arrival in Italy of Charles; but Clement IV. who succeeded him pursued his designs, and Charles was solemnly crowned king of the Sicilies in the church of the Lateran. After this ceremony he advanced with his army to the Neapolitan frontiers where Manfred, who neglected no duty of the king, the general, and the patriot, had concentrated all his forces to resist the invaders.

But he was ill seconded by the fickle people of southern Italy; and in the hour of his need was too generally betrayed by the cowardice and treachery, which, from that age even to our own times, have clung as a foul stain to the Neapolitan character. It was on the plain of Grandella near Benevento, that Manfred resolved by a single battle to avert the consequences of disaffection and to determine the fate of his kingdom. His cavaliers, the nerve of armies, three thousand six hundred in number, were divided into three bodies: the first the remains of the German chivalry of his father and brother, the second composed of the same nation and of Lombard and Tuscan Ghibelins, the third and most numerous, which he commanded in person, of Saracens and Neapolitans. Charles of Anjou ranged his gens d'armes, about six thousand strong, French, Provençals, and Italian Guelfs, in four lines. The battle was begun by the Saracen archers of Manfred, who, crossing a river which separated the armies, made dreadful havock by their thick flights of arrows among the numerous and feeble infantry of Charles. But a division of the French chivalry moved forward to support the foot, the papal legate poured benedictions on them as they advanced, and, raising their national war cry of *Montjoie St. Denis!*, they impetuously overthrew the Saracen archers. The German cavalry now came on in turn, rushed upon the French with loud shouts of *Swabia! Swabia!*, and the encounter between the hostile chivalry was long and obsti-

Battle of Grandella. 1266

CHAP. III. PART II.

nately maintained. Only two divisions of the cavalry of Manfred had yet engaged against the whole gens-d'armerie of the invaders, and still the advantage was with the smaller force, when the French, contrary to the laws of chivalry, were commanded to strike at the horses of their opponents. Numbers of the Germans were dismounted, a common exhaustion had overpowered the combatants, and Manfred led his fresh reserve to succour his party and to seize the victory by a vigorous charge upon the wearied French. But at this crisis most of the Neapolitan barons basely fled, the tide of battle was reversed, the rout among the Germans became general, and the heroic Manfred, rushing into the thickest of the fight, met the death which he sought.

Death of Manfred.

Charles of Anjou, king of the Sicilies.

With the fall of Manfred his whole kingdom submitted to the victor, and the Neapolitans soon discovered that they had shamefully abandoned their gallant prince but to fall under a merited and frightful yoke. Many of the most distinguished adherents of Manfred were barbarously executed, and his wife and daughters terminated their existence in prison. The country near the field of battle was first delivered over in cold blood to pillage and murder, and the whole kingdom afterwards groaned under the extortions and violence of foreigners.

The battle of Grandella was not only fatal to the fortunes and life of Manfred, but it proved also the signal for the depression of the Ghibelin cause throughout Italy. Assisted by Charles the

Guelfs were every where successful; but while the rapacious insolence and ferocity of the French envenomed popular hatred in the Sicilies, the republic of Pisa, ever the faithful ally of the Swabian house, the marquis of Pelavicino (expelled by the Guelfs from his authority in Lombardy) and other Ghibelins, united with the ancient Neapolitan partizans of Manfred in inviting the youthful Conradin, with assurances of a joyful reception, to claim his rights by the sword, and to deliver his inheritance of the Sicilies from the odious grasp of the Angevin conqueror.

Enterprise of Conradin against his usurpation. 1268

Conradin, the last scion of an illustrious stock, was then only seventeen years of age. Centering in his person all the pretensions and inheriting all the daring courage of the Swabian house, he rashly conceived that the moment had arrived to avenge the wrongs of his family and to seat himself on the throne of his ancestors. Two years after the fatal battle of Grandella, he crossed the Alps from Germany at the head of the flower of the young nobility of his country; and being escorted as far as Verona by the forces of the princes of Bavaria and Tyrol his relatives, was immediately joined by the Italian Ghibelins. Passing triumphantly through northern and central Italy, while the Neapolitans and Sicilians had broken out into open insurrection in his favor, he reached the confines of the kingdom of Naples with an army of five thousand gens-d'armes; and, penetrating through the Abruzzos, found the Angevin king posted with a veteran force of

CHAP. III. PART II.

smaller number on the plain of Tagliacozzo. Charles was indebted to the wily council of an old French baron for a stratagem which, by the cruel sacrifice of a portion of his troops, gave him a complete victory. Dividing his army into three bodies, he drew out two of them before the enemy as if they had been his whole array, and entrusted the command to a nobleman, Henry of Cosenza who, resembling him in person, was drest in the royal insignia. Charles himself, with the third body of his bravest cavaliers, lay concealed in a small valley. The young and impetuous Conradin fell into the snare. Reconnoitring the small force before him and reckoning on an easy triumph, he at once led his whole chivalry to the charge. The gens-d'armerie of Cosenza were overwhelmed by superior numbers, Henry himself was slain, and the Germans, taking the corpse for that of the king, imagined the field their own. But their ranks were no sooner broken in the ardour of pursuit and plunder, than Charles led his reserve from their ambush, fresh and in compact order. Their charge was irresistible; the Germans, fatigued dispersed and astonished, were unable to regain their formation; their numbers only swelled the massacre, and the day was utterly lost. Conradin was borne by the barons who surrounded him from the scene of destruction: but only to be betrayed into the hands of the victor, by the treachery of a host in whose castle he had sought a shelter.

cloudless, her climate is pure and healthful, and the country about her walls is the loveliest portion of Tuscany. An amphitheatre of swelling uplands, rising beside the chain of the Apennines, is overspread with vineyards and olive grounds which produce the most exquisite wines and oil of Italy; and the mountains which tower in the distance are covered with productive forests of chesnuts, the food of the peasantry, and give birth to limpid and fertilizing streams. Among these, the classic Arno bathing the walls of the fair city, and flowing into the Mediterranean through vales of the most luxuriant richness, affords an outlet, when its bed is filled in the rainy season, for the transport of superabundant harvests. The Florentines were thus invited by nature to agricultural industry; but they applied themselves also to commerce. By some fortunate chance, the art of manufacturing woollen cloths was very early cultivated in this city, though the exact period and circumstances of its introduction are unknown. The advantage was diligently improved; the excellence of the Florentine cloths was already established in the thirteenth century and continued unrivalled throughout Europe for three hundred years; and this branch of trade, together with that in silks of slower growth if not of later establishment filled the city with prodigious wealth and population.

Commercial prosperity of Florence.

We shall find the spirit of freedom to have been more durable in its existence, and happier in its influence, at Florence than in any of the inland

Superiority of her fortunes over those of other Italian states.

republics of Italy. The discovery of an adequate cause for this distinction is a problem which has scarcely been resolved. The character of the people will hardly account for their superior fortunes. They were not braver, more virtuous, nor less factious than the Lombards; and, on the contrary, they had rather a larger share of inconstant liveliness and desire of change than was common in the Italian temperament. Neither will the security of their situation in an upland province explain, as has been sometimes pretended, their escape from the tyranny which reigned in the Lombard plains, since that tyranny was common to the hilly March of Treviso. And in as far as the changes in the military art to which we have referred were hostile to the cause of liberty, the Florentines possessed no advantage over their neighbours; they were neither more warlike, nor more exempt from the frequent necessity of repairing the weakness of their burgher infantry by taking bodies of mercenary cavalry into pay. But perhaps, although I am not aware that it has been much dwelt upon, the real cause of the preservation of liberty at Florence was the activity of the commercial spirit—the offspring and guardian of free institutions. The influx of riches created an order of wealthy and powerful merchants, unknown in other inland republics, and whose interests were identified with the rights of the commonalty. They were at first the natural leaders of the lower citizens in their struggles against the ancient nobles who had been com

pelled, as in other Italian cities, to dwell within the walls; and the triumph of the people was afterwards perfected and secured by the elevation of a class of hereditary plebeian grandees (popolani grandi) who formed a counterpoise to the power of the original nobility; and were themselves long an essential portion of the democracy.

First dissentions at Florence.

Until the beginning of the thirteenth century, Florence was governed by consuls and a senate of popular choice, but she then fell, like other cities, into the fashion of entrusting her government to a foreign podestá. Though she had engaged in the Tuscan league, her repose was little disturbed by the contest between the papacy and the empire; and tranquillity appears to have reigned within her walls, until a feud between 1215
two noble families plunged her in the long and unhappy distraction of Guelf and Ghibelin hatred. A vain and elegant young man, the chief of the noble house of Buondelmonti, who had been affianced to a lady the relative of a second powerful family, the Uberti, was blinded by the superior charms of another fair to forget his plighted faith, and solicit the hand of his new beauty. His marriage was regarded by the Uberti and their friends as an insult which could only be washed out in his blood, and they cruelly murdered him as he rode in a gala dress on his white palfrey through the city. The fierce passions of private life were usually the source of Italian calamity. Florence was filled with the deadly quarrel which these reciprocal injuries had produced between

CHAP. III. PART III.

REPUBLIC OF FLORENCE. 1183—1268

the two houses; and the feud was multiplied by the hostility of their partizans. The Buondelmonti were attached to the church, the Uberti to the empire; their animosity raised the cry of faction throughout the nobility; and, for thirty-three years, the city was stained with almost uninterrupted bloodshed, before either party had fully prevailed. At length, on Candlemas-eve in the year 1248, the Ghibelin nobles, with the assistance of some German cavalry lent to them by Frederic II., succeeded by a vigorous effort in expelling their Guelf adversaries from the city; and gave the first example, which fatally recoiled on themselves, of razing the massive palaces of their enemies.

The triumph of the Ghibelin nobles was very transient. On the expulsion of the Guelfs they seized the government of the city under imperial protection, and oppressed the citizens with aristocratic insolence. The people, frugal, industrious, and independent, were little disposed to submit to their tyranny; they were besides generally attached to the church; and little more than two years had elapsed when they were excited to resistance by some of the wealthy burghers. Assembling in arms they hastily decreed the formation of a popular constitution; they deposed the podestá and elected a capitano del popolo; and dividing themselves into twenty companies of militia each under a leader, according to the divisions of the city in which they dwelt, they easily compelled the Ghibelin nobility

Establishment of the popular constitution. 1250

to submit to the revolution. A council of twelve ancients, elected every two months in the six quarters of Florence, was entrusted, together with the captain of the people and a new podestá, with the signiory of the republic. This simple constitution was formed just before the death of Frederic II., and the intelligence of the decease of the great chief of Ghibelinism in the same year was no sooner received, than the Florentines completed their work by recalling the Guelf nobles, and obliging the Ghibelins to live in peace with them. The arms of the republic were now vigorously employed, and generally with success in the cause of the church. The Ghibelin cities of Tuscany were every where humbled; Pistoia was for a time entirely subjected; Sienna and Volterra were forced to adopt a Guelf government; and even the powerful republic of Pisa was reduced to sue for peace. It was in the 1255 midst of this brilliant prosperity that the Florentines first struck their gold coin, the florin, which, by its purity, acquired deserved celebrity in the commercial transactions of the middle ages.

Expulsion of the Ghibelin nobles. 1258

This fortunate epoch in the Florentine annals had lasted only eight years, when the discovery of a conspiracy among the Ghibelin nobles to re-establish their tyranny obliged the people to assist the podestá, in expelling them from the city by force of arms. The exiles had recourse for aid to Civil war. Manfred, king of the Sicilies, as the natural protector of their faction, and received from that monarch after some delay a body of eight hundred

CHAP. III. PART III. REPUBLIC OF FLORENCE. 1183—1268

German cavaliers with infantry; while the republic of Sienna, now again under Ghibelin administration, afforded them an asylum and united its army in their cause. The desperate fortunes of the exiles made them desire an immediate and decisive action; but the Siennese were more cautious, and the Florentines had but to avoid a battle to ensure the dissolution of the force of their enemies, as the cavalry of Manfred were only paid for three months. But the exiles prepared a treacherous design against their countrymen which was completely successful. Under pretence of desiring to regain the favor of the republic, they offered, if the Florentine army would advance to Sienna, to open one of the gates to them. The council of ancients credulously entered into the negociation, and induced the people to take the field. Summoning all their Guelf confederates of Tuscany to provide their contingents, the Florentines and their allies advanced to the river Arbia, a few miles from Sienna, with a force altogether of three thousand horse and thirty thousand infantry. But instead of finding that city betrayed to them, their exiles, the German cavalry, and the whole Ghibelin army of Sienna and her allies, unexpectedly sallied from the gates to attack them, and, though very inferior in numbers, succeeded by the surprise, and by treason in the Florentine ranks, in entirely routing them with dreadful slaughter. The lower people of Florence seized with terror, and perhaps left defenceless by the destruction of their

Battle of the Arbia. 1260

army, abandoned all hope of resistance to the conquerors. The principal Guelf families among the nobles and burghers retired to the friendly state of Lucca; and, on the appearance of her victorious exiles, Florence immediately surrendered. What followed may illustrate the rancour of Italian hatred. The Pisans and Siennese, knowing the firm attachment of the Florentine people to the Guelf cause, proposed in a general Ghibelin diet the destruction and razing of the city, as the only security for the opposite party in Tuscany; and the vengeance of the Ghibelin exiles of Florence eagerly supported the vote for the ruin of the country from which they had been expelled. It was only the voice of a single patriot which averted the doom of Florence. Farinata degl' Uberti was the most distinguished leader among the Florentine Ghibelins, and his talents and exertion had been the soul of their cause; but he indignantly resisted the proposition in which his party had concurred, and Florence was indebted to the virtuous influence of his personal character, and to the force of his passionate eloquence, for protection against the fury of her unnatural sons. The Ghibelins of Florence could only maintain the arbitrary government which they now re-established, by foreign aid; and as long as Manfred reigned, a strong body of his lancers garrisoned the city under count Guido Novello. The exiled Guelfs on the other hand joined the standard of Charles of Anjou on his entrance into Italy, and fought

Revengeful spirit and tyranny of the Ghibelin conquerors.

CHAP. III. PART III. REPUBLIC OF FLORENCE. 1183—1268

in his army with remarkable valour at the battle of Grandella. That victory of the Guelf party, with happier results in Tuscany than in the Sicilies, brought deliverance to Florence. When intelligence of the event reached the city, the joy of the people was openly expressed, and count Guido, finding that efforts to conciliate their affection came now too late, and intimidated by their revolt, withdrew with his gens-d'armerie and the native Ghibelins. The citizens immediately fortified themselves against the return of their oppressors; the policy of Charles of Anjou induced him to dispatch a body of cavaliers to their assistance; and, under his protection, with the dignity which was no more than a shadow of signor, the republican government was restored in full vigour.

Deliverance of Florence. 1266

Settlement of the constitution.

The establishment of the constitution of 1266 is a remarkable æra in Florentine history. It was attended by three circumstances which exercised a lasting influence upon the character of the republic; the erection of the *arts*, or companies of the citizens engaged in commerce, into political bodies; the unresisted exclusion of the nobles from power; and the formation of an organized Guelf society or party, an imperium in imperio, a miniature republic within the republic itself. The commercial citizens had for half a century been classed, according to their occupations, into greater and minor arts; the former, seven in number, were the lawyers, merchants of foreign cloth, bankers, woollen manufacturers, physicians

and druggists, silk manufacturers, and furriers; the latter, at this period of five descriptions, but which in the issue extended to fourteen, were retailers of cloth, butchers, shoemakers, smiths, masons, and other inferior tradesmen. The seven greater arts were now erected by law into corporations whose existence was essential to the constitution; and had each a council of its own, a judicial magistrate, and a captain or standard bearer (gonfaloniere) around whose banner the company assembled whenever the peace or safety of the city was endangered. The minor arts were not incorporated until later periods.

For the discharge of the executive administration, the council of ancients was restored under a different name; and twelve Buonuomini (good men), chosen in the six quarters of Florence, composed the visible signiory. But they could determine on no measure of importance without the successive approbation of four larger councils of citizens, from the two first of which the nobles were excluded, while the chiefs of the greater arts sat in three of them by virtue of their office. About five hundred citizens of all degrees had thus immediate voices in every deliberation of common interest, and though the general parliament of the people was seldom convened, the ultimate sovereignty of the democracy was a recognized and efficient principle.

The exile and proscription of the Ghibelins were followed by the confiscation of their estates; and the remains of their property, after satisfying

CHAP. III. PART III.

the losses suffered by the Guelfs during their government, was divided between the state and the new corporation which, with a signiory and two councils of its own, was instituted to watch over Guelf interests and prosecute suspected Ghibelins. The primary object of this powerful and wealthy body is explained by the relentless spirit which, in the Italian republics, ever pursued an outlawed and unhappy faction; but we shall find the Guelf society in the sequel engaged in schemes of ambition which were foreign to its original purpose. *

MARITIME ITALIAN REPUBLICS. 1183—1269

From the epoch of the peace of Constance to the end of the twelfth century, the history of Venice is occupied by no occurrence which deserves to be recorded. But the first years of the thirteenth century are the most brilliant and glorious in the long annals of the republic. They are filled with the details of a romantic and memorable enterprise: the equipment of a prodigious naval armament, the fearless pursuit of a distant and gigantic adventure, the conquest of an ancient empire, the division of the spoil, and the consummation of commercial grandeur. The diversion of the fourth crusade from its original destination to the walls of Constantinople, and the siege and capture of the eastern capital by

Venice. Her share in the Latin conquest of the eastern empire.

* Sismondi; vol. ii. pp. 324—331. iii. pp. 93—97. 169—184. 219—244. 358—368. with reference to the Annals of Muratori, and the third book of Pignotti's History of Tuscany, a work of singular erudition and value.

the barons of France and the Venetians have been related, at least twice, in our language with so much accuracy and elegance, that, if my limits permitted and my subject required me to attempt the same narration, I could hope to add no interesting fact, and should despair of arresting attention, to that which had been already so admirably told. But my plan forbids me to introduce at length this splendid episode; and the particulars of the Latin expedition belong rather to the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire, or the History of the Crusades, than to that of Italy, or even more strictly, of Venice. Referring the reader to other pages for the story of the fourth crusade, it will be my business to confine myself to its attendant circumstances as they illustrate the resources and character of the republic, and to its important consequences upon her power and greatness.

In the year 1198, pope Innocent III., by the preaching of Fulk of Neuilly, a French priest, had stirred up the greatest nobles of that kingdom to undertake a crusade for the deliverance of the Holy Sepulchre. Baldwin, count of Flanders, enrolled himself in the same cause, and Boniface, marquis of Montferrat, accepted the command of the confederates. They were warned by the sad experience of former crusades not to attempt the passage to Asia by land; and the maritime states of Italy were the only powers which could furnish shipping for the transport of a numerous army. The barons therefore sent a deputation to Venice 1201

CHAP. III. PART III. MARITIME ITALIAN REPUBLICS. 1183—1269

to entreat the alliance and negociate for the assistance of the republic.

Henry Dandalo, who, at the extraordinary age of ninety-three and in almost total blindness, still preserved the vigorous talents and heroism of youth, had been for nine years doge of Venice. He received the illustrious ambassadors with distinction; and, after the object of their mission had been regularly laid before the councils of the state, announced to them in the name of the republic the conditions upon which a treaty would be concluded. As the aristocracy had not yet perfected the entire exclusion of the people from a voice in public affairs, the magnitude of the business demanded the solemn assent of the citizens, and a general assembly was convened in the square of St. Mark. There, before a multitude of more than ten thousand persons, the proud nobles of France threw themselves upon their knees to implore the assistance of the commercial republicans in redeeming the sepulchre of Christ. Their tears and eloquence prevailed; the terms of alliance had been left to the dictation of the doge and his counsellors; and, for 85,000 marks of silver—less than 200,000*l.* of our money, and not an unreasonable demand—the republic engaged to transport 4500 knights with their horses and arms, 9000 esquires, and 20,000 infantry to any part of the coasts of the east which the service of God might require, to provision them for nine months, and to escort and aid them with a fleet of fifty gallies; but with the farther condi-

tions that the money should be paid before embarkation, and that whatever conquests might be made should be equally shared between the barons and the republic.

The Venetians demanded a year of preparation; and, before that period had expired, both their fidelity to the engagement and the extent of their resources were conspicuously displayed. Barracks for the troops, stabling for the horses, and abundance of provisions had been prepared for the rendezvous of the crusaders; and 120 palanders, or large flat-bottomed vessels for the conveyance of the horses, 240 sail of transports for the men, and 70 storeships, laden with provisions and warlike engines, were all in readiness for the expedition; while a formidable squadron of 50 gallies was destined to convoy the fleet, and to co-operate with the land forces.

But all the crusaders were not equally true to their faith: many whose ardour had cooled shamefully deserted their vows; others had taken ship for Palestine in Flanders, at Marseilles, and at other Mediterranean ports; and, when the army had mustered at Venice, their numbers fell very short of expectation, and they were utterly unable to defray the stipulated cost of the enterprise. Though their noble leaders made a generous sacrifice of their valuables, above 30,000 marks were yet wanted to complete the full payment, and the republic, with true mercantile caution, refused to permit the sailing of the fleet until the amount of the deficiency should have been lodged in their

treasury. The timid and the lukewarm already rejoiced that the crusade must be abandoned, when Dandalo suggested an equivalent for the remainder of the debt, by the condition that payment should be deferred if the barons would assist the republic in reducing the city of Zara, which had again revolted, before they pursued the ulterior objects of their voyage.

Reduction of Zara.

The citizens of Zara had committed themselves to the sovereignty of the king of Hungary, and the pope forbade the crusaders to attack the Christian subjects of a monarch who had himself assumed the cross. But the desire of honorably discharging their obligations prevailed with the French barons over the fear of papal displeasure,

1202 and, after some scruples, the army embarked for Zara. The aged doge having obtained permission from the republic to take the cross and lead the fleet, many of the citizens followed his example in ranging themselves under the sacred banner, and the veteran hero sailed with the expedition of nearly five hundred vessels—the most magnificent armament, perhaps, which had ever covered the bosom of the Adriatic. Though Zara was deemed in that age one of the strongest cities in the world, the inhabitants were terrified or compelled into a surrender after a siege of only five days: their lives were spared, but their houses were pillaged and their defences razed to the ground.

After this conquest it was determined, as the season was far advanced, that the army should winter at Zara and pursue the objects of their

sacred expedition in the following spring. It was during this period of repose, which was not undisturbed by broils between the French soldiers and the Venetian mariners, that an entirely new destination was given to the armament. In one of those revolutions, so frequent and natural in the palaces of despots, Isaac Angelus emperor of the east, himself an usurper, was deprived at once of his diadem and eyes, and consigned to a prison by his own brother Alexius. The youthful son of Isaac, named also Alexius, was spared from the same fate to wait on the person of his uncle, but he found means to escape from his tyranny. He arrived in Italy while the crusaders were assembling at Venice, and their powerful array inspired him with the hope of recovering his father's throne by their aid. At Zara he renewed in person the offers, which he had already made by his ambassadors at Venice, to induce the confederates to direct their arms against the usurpation of his uncle. He tempted both their avarice and their religious zeal by the promise that their success should be rewarded by a payment of 200,000 marks, the subjection of the Greek church to the papal authority, and the co-operation of the forces of the eastern empire in the deliverance of Palestine. Most of the French barons were influenced by these magnificent proposals, but a division was produced among the crusaders by the interference of the pope. The emperor Alexius had ingratiated himself into his favor, and Innocent, trusting that the religious allegiance of the

1203

CHAP. III. PART III. MARITIME ITALIAN REPUBLICS. 1183—1269

Greek empire to the Roman see would become the price of keeping the usurper on the throne, took him under his protection, and prohibited the crusaders on pain of excommunication from deferring the performance of their vows for any other object.

The superstitious French already reproached themselves that they had once disobeyed the injunctions of the pontiff by attacking Zara; many of the most eminent barons chose rather to separate from the army than to incur the guilt of a second offence; and the cause of young Alexius would have been hopeless, if the doge and the Venetians had been equally moved by the dread of spiritual censures. But Venice, though preserving a respectful demeanour towards the Holy See, had already adopted a firm and enlightened policy which repelled the encroachments of papal tyranny. Before the expedition quitted Venice, the doge had refused to admit the control of the papal legate over the conduct of the crusade; and the reduction of Zara was an earnest how lightly the republic would regard the authority of Innocent, whenever it should be opposed to her passions or interests. Against the Greek empire she had more than one cause of animosity; and motives of vengeance and commercial ambition were mingled in the ostensible design of succouring the youthful and unfortunate Alexius.

When, in the decay of all national energy, the slothful Greeks had abandoned even the commerce of their own dominions to foreigners, the

Venetians had formed advantageous establishments for trade in the capital and provinces of the eastern empire, and in return for the favors which they enjoyed, had long afforded the assistance of their fleets to the emperors. But, during the last half of the twelfth century, these friendly relations had been frequently interrupted. The enterprising republicans betrayed their arrogance and contempt towards the degenerate and feeble Greeks; their insolence provoked hatred and injury; and every vicissitude of revolution or popular tumult in the eastern empire was the signal for the plunder and mal-treatment of the Venetian merchants, either by the systematic exactions of the imperial officers, or the irregular violence of the cowardly populace. The arms of the republic or the dread of her vengeance generally, indeed, obtained subsequent indemnification for the losses of her citizens; but repeated broils cherished mutual antipathy, and when the Pisans availed themselves of the dislike of the Greeks towards their rivals to supplant them in their commercial relations with the empire, the exasperation of the Venetians reached its height. By assisting young Alexius, their republic would avenge its wrongs, and regain its commercial advantages in the east.

The politic Dandalo was not slow to discern the favorable prospect which opened to his country: his patriotic ambition was not shackled by any superstitious veneration for the papal authority, and his talents were successfully exerted in

overcoming the religious scruples of the French barons. Though the army was weakened by many desertions, the host of the crusaders finally resolved, notwithstanding the fulminations of Innocent, to undertake an expedition which, besides holding out such splendid invitations to their cupidity, might plausibly be represented as an advantageous preparation for the subsequent deliverance of Palestine. The recovery of Jerusalem would be promoted by their possession of Constantinople; and the doge exultingly steered the armament against the seat of the eastern empire.

I have declined the arduous and unnecessary task of describing the first siege of the Grecian capital by the crusaders; the revolution which restored the captive emperor Isaac to his throne, and associated young Alexius in the imperial purple; the hatred of their conquered subjects, the deposition and death of the father and son; the vengeance of the Latins against the new usurper and the contemptible nation; the second
1204 siege and capture of Constantinople; and the disgraceful fall of the once mighty empire of the east before a few thousand French warriors and Venetian seamen. In the brief course of a year one of the most astonishing enterprises in the history of warfare had been fearlessly achieved; and no other labour remained to the victors than to share their enormous accumulation of booty,*

* One fragment of that booty yet remains—the four bronze horses now in St. Mark's square at Venice. They are of Greek

to elect from their ranks a new head to the empire, and to determine the partition of their conquests. The solemn choice of the confederates bestowed the diadem of the east on Baldwin count of Flanders, but no more than a fourth of the capital and empire was allotted to the support of his dignity and power; and the remainder was equally divided between the French barons and the Venetian republic.

Splendid acquisitions of the republic.

The talents and heroism of the venerable Dandalo had won for the doges of Venice the splendid and accurate title of Dukes of three-eighths of the Roman Empire; he died at Constantinople almost immediately after the Latin conquest, full of years and glory; and bequeathed to the republic the difficult office of governing a greater extent of dominion than had ever fallen to the inhabitants of a single city. All the islands of the Ionian and most of those in the Ægean seas, great part of the shores of continental Greece, many of the ports in the Propontis or sea of Marmora, the city of Adrianople, and one fourth of the eastern capital itself were all embraced in her allotment; and the large and valuable island of Candia was added to her possessions by purchase from the

workmanship, but not of a very pure age of art. Their interest principally lies in their historic associations. They have adorned the triumphs of the Greek of the lower Empire, of Venice (when Venice was free), of the French, and now (since Venice is a Scythian province) they denote the victory of the Austrian. Their tale may yet be incomplete, for the arts of peace have been doomed to follow in the train of war, and to mark the epochs of empires.

marquis of Montferrat to whom it had been assigned. But the prudence of her senate awakened Venice to a just sense of her own want of intrinsic strength to preserve these immense dependencies; and it was wisely resolved to retain only under the public government of the state the colony at Constantinople with the island of Candia and those in the Ionian sea. The subjects of the republic were not required to imitate the forbearance of the senate; and many of the great Venetian families were encouraged, or at least permitted, to found principalities among the ruins of the eastern empire, with a reservation of feudal allegiance to their country. In this manner most of the islands of the Ægean Archipelago were granted in fief to ten noble houses of Venice, and continued for several centuries subject to their insular princes.

From the Latin conquest of Constantinople, to the close of the period to which the present chapter is devoted, the affairs of Venice continued to be almost entirely separated from those of Italy in general. Her attention was exclusively devoted to the care of a vast commerce, the anxious charge of foreign and disaffected subjects, the support of the Latin empire of the east, and the prosecution of sanguinary maritime warfare with the republic of Genoa. Some notice is demanded for all these subjects, but none of them need detain us long. By far the most solid advantage which accrued to the republic from the expedition of Dandalo was the immense extension of her

Extension of Venetian commerce.

commerce. From the Adriatic to the Euxine, a continued chain of sea-ports had fallen into the possession of Latin nobles, who were bound by ties of friendship and interest to her citizens. Her fleets were the common carriers for their commercial wants, and Constantinople itself her great depôt for the trade of eastern Europe. The activity of her merchants was equal to the measure of the advantages which they enjoyed; and her wealth and splendour were now honorably perfected by their industrious enterprise. In another direction the island of Candia was the arm which connected their trade with the shores of Egypt and Syria; but that desirable possession was endangered during the whole of the thirteenth century by frequent revolts.

Affairs of the Venetian colonies.

When the senate resolved to establish their government over Candia and the Ionian islands, a strong squadron of gallies easily reduced them to subjection; garrisons were placed in their fortresses; and it became the policy of the state to colonize their shores with Venetian citizens. But the numerous population of Candia submitted with reluctance to a foreign yoke, and all the resources of Venice were long demanded to crush their frequent and alarming insurrections. We may suspect that the disaffection of the Candiotes had too often its origin and excuse in the oppression of Venetian governors; for we find that the same spirit of revolt prevailed in the Dalmatian maritime possessions of Venice, and that the

CHAP. III. PART III.

MARITIME ITALIAN REPUBLICS. 1183—1269

odious sway of the republic was only maintained in her numerous dependencies by the vigour of her arms.

Connection of the republic with the Latin empire of the east.

After the first moment of conquest and terror, the weakness of the Latin empire of Constantinople was palpably betrayed to the numerous Greeks. Unwarlike and cowardly as they were, the shame of submission to the detested Latins was animated into resistance when, by the dispersion of the French barons over the provinces, their scanty force was lost among the native population. A spark of hope and independence was kindled among a nation of slaves by the weakness and divisions of their conquerors; and almost immediately after the capture of Constantinople, several small states were saved and formed from the wrecks of the empire by Grecian leaders, whose personal qualities gave a better title to the obedience of their countrymen than hereditary pretensions. One of these states was established at Nice on the Asiatic side of the Bosphorus, and attracted from the opposite shores all the better spirits of Constantinople and the European provinces, whose patriotism or religious zeal spurned the yoke of the stranger and the supremacy of the Latin church. The Greeks were gradually nerved by adversity, their new empire silently grew in strength and extent, and re-crossing the Bosphorus, they successively wrested from the Latins the neighbouring provinces of Europe.

The power of the handful of warriors who had

seized the eastern empire could never be adequate to its preservation. Their prayers for assistance from western Europe were met with coldness and neglect; they were disunited among themselves; and the Latin empire, whose sole force was a few turbulent barons—the compeers rather than the vassals of their feeble princes—was destitute of all foreign aid, except such as Venice could spare from her own more immediate necessities and interests. The maritime strength of the great colony, which the republic had established in her quarter of Constantinople, was long the chief support of the Latin throne, and the fleets of the parent state were sometimes added to the force of the colonists. But the occasional efforts of the republic could not prevent the extinction of a power, which the reviving energies of the Greeks had limited to the walls of Constantinople. During the absence of the small Latin force with the Venetian fleet on an imprudent expedition, the capital was surprised; Baldwin II., the poor phantom of imperial dignity, sought refuge with the descendants of the Latins in the returning gallies of the republic; and Michael Palæologus, the sovereign of Nice, restored the eastern empire of the Greeks, fifty-seven years after its overthrow by the crusaders. 1261

The consequences of this great revolution were not so disastrous to the trade of Venice, or to her colony at Constantinople, as might have been apprehended from the intimate connection of the

CHAP. III. PART III. MARITIME ITALIAN REPUBLICS. 1183—1269

republic with the Latin empire, and her long career of injurious hostility towards the Greeks. The Venetian magistrates and the greater portion of their countrymen had fled with Baldwin, but many others had remained in the city; and though Palæologus prosecuted the war against their republic, and dispossessed the Venetian feudatories of some islands in the Ægean, he prudently abstained from depriving his capital of the industry of the Italians. Though the Genoese had been his allies, and the Venetians his bitterest enemies, he extended an impartial protection to the merchants of the two states and of Pisa. A separate quarter was allotted in Constantinople to each of these three maritime people: they were permitted to govern themselves by their own magistrates, and three little Italian republics were embraced within the walls of the eastern capital.

The furious naval wars which broke out in the thirteenth century between Genoa and Venice give a connection to the affairs of the two states, and may introduce a brief notice in this place of the prominent circumstances in the Genoese fortunes during the period before us. From the peace of Constance to the extinction of the Swabian family, the condition of the third mari-

Pisa.

time republic, Pisa, unlike that of the other two, was closely interwoven with the common politics of Italy, and presents no fact for observation which we have not already thrown into the gene-

ral stream of Italian history. We have remarked that, in the wars of Frederic Barbarossa, Pisa espoused the cause of the church; but her attachment was transferred and her fidelity secured to the empire, by the confirmation of regalian rights and the sovereignty over an extensive territory, which the emperor Henry VI. bestowed upon her; and, ever after her alliance with that monarch, she continued, by unchangeable inclination and principle, Ghibelin. The queen of that party in Tuscany, her affection never swerved from the house of Swabia. We have seen her squadrons guarding the seas for Frederic II. and for Manfred, and her armies upholding the Ghibelin name in her province; and her exhortations and aid inspired and attended the ill fated expedition of Conradin. Still the rival and perpetual foe of Genoa, she forgot her commercial jealousy of the Venetians in this more inveterate hostility, and, flourishing in undiminished prosperity, sided with the latter people against a common enemy. 1192

Genoa.

Her internal distractions.

The long domestic tranquillity which had reigned at Genoa, with only one interruption, to the beginning of the thirteenth century, was then destroyed by the ambition of the aristocracy, and the hostility with which their usurpations were naturally regarded by the lower people. The greater part of the nobles, enrolling themselves into eight associations or companies, had silently acquired such an influence in the state that they were at length suffered to form a council, by a

CHAP. III. PART III. MARITIME ITALIAN REPUBLICS. 1183—1269

deputation of one member from each body; which, under the nominal supremacy of a foreign podestá, arrogated to itself all the sovereign powers, and filled the republic with magistrates of its own nomination and exclusively of noble birth. Four great families, the Doria, the Spinola, the Fieschi, and the Grimaldi, were conspicuous in an oligarchy that was not only hateful to the plebeians, but to the portion of the nobility which was not enrolled in the eight companies. The ineffectual struggles of the people agitated Genoa with the usual convulsions of Italian faction, and were near producing the same disastrous consequences over which Lombardy had for centuries to mourn. There were not wanting men among the nobility to forsake the cause of their order, and to flatter the passions of the democracy, for purposes of selfish ambition. Several of these noble demagogues placed themselves at different periods in the thirteenth century at the head of the populace; and one, more famous than the rest, Guilelmo
1257—1262 Boccanegra, reigned for five years as captain of the people, until his undisguised tyranny alienated the citizens, and induced them to escape from more alarming evils by restoring the noble government. Yet the people were still restless and dissatisfied; the state was harassed by continual troubles; and the general rights of all orders would have been sacrificed to an individual, if the republic had not possessed two fortunate safe-guards in the rivalry of her nobles, and

in the more generous spirit of independence which animated her commercial citizens.

These internal distractions did not paralyze the energies of Genoa in her foreign relations; and the vigour of the republic was never more strikingly displayed than when her bosom was torn by faction. At the period of the Latin conquest of Constantinople, the aggrandizement of Venice had excited the jealousy and enterprise of the Genoese, and they endeavoured to seize on a share of the spoils of the eastern empire. But the fleet which they dispatched for this purpose 1205
against the isles of the Ægean, was encountered and completely defeated by the Venetian admiral Trevisani; and they were compelled to desist from further attempts.

Furious naval wars between the Genoese and Venetians.

The animosity created by this contest rankled for half a century, before the two republics measured their strength in a more obstinate and protracted struggle; and the petty occasion which was at last the signal for an open rupture betrayed the depth of the hatred which they mutually cherished. In the city of Acre—one of the few places on the coasts of Palestine which the Christians still possessed—the commercial residents of Genoa and Venice quarrelled about the 1258
possession of the single church which was allotted to them in common. The Genoese excluded their rivals, fortified the building, pillaged the magazines of the Venetians, and expelled them from the city. The haughty queen of the Adriatic

immediately equipped a fleet to avenge the affront: sailing to Acre, and burning the vessels of their rivals in that harbour, her troops landed, took the disputed church by storm, and drove the Genoese in their turn from the city.

After these mutual injuries the fleets of the two republics met on their proper element. In the first encounter, which was only the prelude to more dreadful combats, the Venetians were victorious; the two states armed with the utmost rapidity; and, in the course of the same summer, they had each dispatched a formidable squadron to the Syrian coast. Off the port of Tyre, the Venetian force of forty-nine gallies and four heavy ships, under Andrea Zeno, the son of the reigning doge, discovered the Genoese admiral Guilelmo Boccanegra with four large ships also and forty gallies; and the fleets, after passing the night in observing each other, engaged with fury at sun-rise. The Genoese line was broken at the commencement of the action, and after a desperate conflict their squadron was completely defeated with the loss of twenty gallies, and the slaughter of above two thousand men. The houses and property of their countrymen at Tyre were immediately destroyed, and their whole colony in that town made prisoners. But Genoa was still undismayed, a second fleet was equipped, and the war continued with increased obstinacy.

Each state now fortified itself by a foreign
1261 alliance. While Venice obtained the aid of Pisa,

the Genoese allied themselves, notwithstanding the prejudices of the Latin world and the excommunications of the pope, with the Greeks; acquired possession of the island of Scio; and, on the capture of Constantinople, were gratified by Palæologus with the destruction of the palace and exchange of the Venetian colony. The policy of the emperor, however, forbade his allies from the persecution of their rivals in the eastern capital; their arrogance and numbers even excited his suspicions; and, removing them from the city, he fixed the seat of the Genoese colony in the suburb of Galata on the opposite side of the port. A truce between the emperor and Venice shortly left the Genoese to encounter the Venetians single handed; and in five great battles the flag of St. Mark still waved triumphantly. In one victory off Trapani on the Sicilian coast, which was marked by a horrible carnage, not a single Genoese vessel escaped. Yet such was the untameable and heroic pride of Genoa that, during eleven years of maritime disaster, no word of submission or peace was ever breathed in her councils; and it was only by the intervention of Louis IX. of France, who needed the assistance of both republics for the transport of his last and fatal expedition against the infidels, that,—in the year after the extinction of the Swabian house— a truce was effected between the combatants. 1269
Not a single advantage rested with either party: Venice might indeed recount her series of splendid

CHAP. III. PART III.

MARITIME ITALIAN REPUBLICS. 1183—1269

and barren victories, but the enormous waste of blood and of treasure had fallen equally on her rival and herself. *

* For the annals of Venice and the other maritime republics, A.D. 1183—1269., I have generally followed Muratori, the fourth book of Sandi, and the fourth and fifth books of Daru. It is almost needless to add that, in omitting the particulars of the Latin conquest of Constantinople, I would refer the reader to the seventieth chapter of Gibbon's Decline and Fall and, to the second volume of Mr. Mills' History of the Crusades. The circumstances are described by the former writer with unparalleled force and splendour, and by the latter with truth, taste, and chastened beauty.

CHAPTER IV.

FROM THE EXTINCTION OF THE HOUSE OF SWABIA, TO THE MIDDLE OF THE FOURTEENTH CENTURY. A. D. 1268—1350.

PART I.

State of Italy after the Extinction of the Swabian Family—Cruelty, Ambition, and Power of Charles of Anjou—Pontificate of Gregory X.—His ineffectual Efforts to reconcile the Italian Factions—Troubles at Genoa and in other Quarters—Story of Imilda de' Lambertazzi—Papal Jealousy excited by Charles of Anjou—Rodolph of Hapsburg, Emperor—Nicholas III.—His Policy—Cession of Romagna, &c. to the Holy See—Affairs of Sicily, Giovanni di Procida—The Sicilian Vespers—General Revolt of the Island from Charles of Anjou—Naval Defeat of Charles—Peter of Aragon, King of Sicily also—Last Years, Humiliation, and Death of Charles—Affairs of Lombardy, Rise of the Visconti—Tuscany—Grandeur of Pisa—War between Pisa and Genoa—Battle of Meloria and Extinction of the Naval Power of Pisa—Story of Count Ugolino—Affairs of Pisa after his Death—Florence—Creation of the Priors of Arts—Lawless Spirit of the Nobles—Enactments against them, Ordinances of Justice, &c.—Factions of the Black and White Guelfs—Fall of the latter Party—Banishment of Dante.

State of Italy after

With the extinction of the house of Swabia, the great divisions of Italian faction had entirely lost their original signification and ostensible purposes. The triumph of the church was complete.

CHAP. IV. PART I.

the extinction of the Swabian family.

No enemy remained to excite the fears and intrigues of the papacy; the imperial standard no longer floated over Italy, the imperial dignity itself was for many years suspended; and, while the Guelf star ruled the ascendant from the Alps to Calabria, the Ghibelin name was almost everywhere a term of proscription. Yet these war cries of faction, so far from being hushed by the decision of the contest, were only repeated with deeper execrations. The relentless spirit of hatred which had been cherished for successive generations was inherent in the national character; a senseless word or an accidental emblem was a sufficient excuse for the indulgence of the most odious passions; and, without one honorable motive or intelligible design, the best feelings and energies of an ardent and intellectual people were extinguished and consumed in struggles which could terminate only in degradation and weakness.

From the middle of the thirteenth century, the unhappy divisions of faction which raged without principle or object had the effect of depriving Italian history of all general and determinate connection. For above two hundred years, we shall be at a loss to discover among the numerous states of Italy any moment of common action and union on which it is possible to rest as an epoch in her annals: we are thrown on a wide and tempestuous sea of endless revolution and bloodshed and crime, and yet these are not the storms of barbarism. The refulgence of intellectual light, the

revival of poetry and literature, the dawn and noonday of immortal art, play over the troubled scene in strange contrast with its gloomy horrors:—with the atrocities of implacable factions, the din of unceasing wars, the appalling silence of domestic tragedy.

In the absence of any natural division which I can give to this long period, I shall conduct the present chapter to the middle of the fourteenth century. The general features which it will present are the fortunes of southern Italy as influenced by the Angevin dynasty of Naples, the removal of the papacy to Avignon, the transformation of the republics of Lombardy into hereditary principalities, the decline of Pisa, the grandeur of Florence, the rivalry of Genoa and Venice, and the changes in the constitution of both those great maritime commonwealths.

Cruelty, ambition, and power of Charles of Anjou.

By the defeat of Conradin, Charles of Anjou appeared to have consummated his power over his new kingdom of the Sicilies. No rival seemed left to dispute its possession; for though a surviving daughter of Manfred, Constance, was married to the king of Aragon, the pretensions* which she might convey to her husband, a sovereign of

* The glove which Conradin had thrown from his scaffold was said to have been carried to Peter of Aragon, and that monarch and his descendants were not unwilling to encourage the belief, that the royal victim had designed the gauntlet of vengeance for the husband of Constance, as the inheritor of the Swabian rights. But if this touching and romantic incident really occurred, it is most probable that the glove was intended only as a relic to animate the national revenge.

CHAP. IV. PART I.

small power at the extremity of Europe, were little calculated to raise apprehension. Not contented with the judicial murder of Conradin,—an act which excited at the time, as it has done through subsequent ages, general and unqualified abhorrence—Charles satiated his cruelty upon the miserable adherents of the young prince. On the same scaffold on which he had died, Frederic duke of Austria and several Ghibelin chiefs were successively led to execution; the revolted barons of Calabria, and all the Sicilian nobles of the same party, who fell into the hands of the French on the suppression of the insurrection in that island, shared a similar fate. The vengeance of the conquerors descended to meaner victims; and, besides the massacre of whole troops of Ghibelins at Rome and other places on the continent, the Sicilians were mercilessly butchered wherever they were found in arms. The desire of vengeance with which these cruelties might inspire the islanders was sharpened by the continued exactions and insults of the French. A deep and silent hatred of their foreign oppressors filled all ranks of the Sicilians, and slowly prepared the way for the horrible explosion which followed.

For many years, however, no reverse shaded the criminal excesses of the new king of the Sicilies. His power on the contrary was continually increasing, and he confidently aspired to the same authority over all Italy which the emperors had formerly enjoyed. Florence and her Guelfs had bestowed on him a nominal signiory,

and a more substantial advantage was gained by the fall of the marquis Pelavicino, the chief of the Ghibelins of Lombardy, who was again expelled from all the cities which he had governed to die in exile. The pope had already invested Charles with the office of papal vicar general in Tuscany, and this new title, by which Clement IV. pretended to constitute him imperial lieutenant during the interregnum of the empire, gave him the supremacy over the Guelf party in that province. Almost all Lombardy was now under Guelf authority, and in a diet of that party many 1269
of the cities chose the king of the Sicilies for their signor, while others more prudently declared that they would have him for a friend, not a master. He would probably not have contented himself with this relation, if his views had been confined to Italy. But he had designs upon the Greek empire; and he was, besides, diverted from the pursuit of ambition in Italy by the influence which his brother Louis IX. possessed over him. He was persuaded by that pious monarch to accompany him to Africa in his last crusade, and his 1270
ability lightened the disastrous issue of the expedition.

Pontificate of Gregory X. 1272—1276

Pope Clement IV. had survived the execution of Conradin only a month; and the cardinals after his death suffered nearly three years to elapse before they gave another head to the church. At length, after the return of Charles of Anjou from Africa, their choice fell upon an ecclesiastic who held the simple station of archdeacon

CHAP. IV. PART I.

in Palestine. A long residence in that distant country had separated the new pontiff, who assumed the name of Gregory X., from the factious politics of the Italian church, and engrossed his mind with the sole project of delivering the Holy Land from the infidels. Attaching little importance to the quarrel between the Guelfs and Ghibelins, which was now left without a reasonable motive, he earnestly employed himself, on his appearance in Italy in the year after his election, in labouring to compose the deep-seated animosities of those parties, and to unite the powers of Europe in a general crusade. His policy produced the singular spectacle of a pope acting with sincerity as the common father of Christendom; but his impartial design of restoring tranquillity to Italy was frustrated by the usual passions of faction and by the selfish ambition of the Angevin king.

His ineffectual efforts to reconcile the Italian factions.

Gregory began the work of pacification in Tuscany, where he found the Ghibelins in subjection or exile. Sienna had been forced by Florence to give the helm to the Guelfs, and to expel their adversaries; even Pisa had been compelled to receive back her Guelf exiles after an unsuccessful campaign against Charles of Anjou; and the persecuted Ghibelins of other cities and of Florence especially burned with exasperation against their oppressors. Attended by Charles, Gregory held a general assembly of the Florentine people on the banks of the Arno, and summoning before him the principal men of both parties, commanded

the restoration of the Ghibelins to their homes and property, and the conclusion of a domestic peace both at Florence and in the other Tuscan cities. His authority was respectfully acknowledged; the Ghibelins returned among their fellow citizens; and Gregory pronounced a sentence of excommunication against the first who should disturb the public happiness. But Charles of Anjou was influenced by far other feelings than the venerable pontiff; he considered such a pacification fatal to his ambitious views; and he did not hesitate to make the Ghibelins of Florence understand that his partizans had orders to put them all to death if they did not immediately quit the city. The character of the tyrant gave full weight to his menace; the Ghibelins hastily withdrew after communicating their danger to the pope; and the indignation of Gregory against Charles and the Florentine Guelfs was vented in a sentence of interdict which he thundered over the city. *

Troubles at Genoa.

While the Ghibelins were thus persecuted in Tuscany, the opposite party shared a similar fate at Genoa, and the influence of Gregory was equally unavailing to pacify the factions in that

* In journeying through Tuscany afterwards, Gregory was prevented by the overflowing of the Arno from using its fords, and obliged to cross the river by the bridge of Florence. "It not being decent," says Pignotti, "for a pope to pass through a city under interdict," the simple saint restored his benediction to Florence while he travelled through it, and excommunicated it again as soon as he had passed the gates.

CHAP. IV. PART I.

city. Two of the four great families, the Spinola and Doria, gaining the favor of the people by their promotion of some democratical changes in the constitution, raised themselves to the government of the republic, and drove their rivals, the Grimaldi and Fieschi, into banishment. Charles of Anjou had plundered some Genoese merchants, and this was sufficient both to induce the successful party to unite their republic with the Ghibelin cause, and to force the exiles into the arms of the

1273 Guelfs. As usual a furious war was the consequence: but it produced no great event, and though Charles directed the whole Guelf power of Tuscany against the Genoese, while an army of his Provençals invaded Liguria from the western frontier, the republicans defended their territory with courage and success. This was for some years almost the only occasion on which fortune attended the Ghibelin standard.

and in other quarters.

It need scarcely be told that the same spirit of discord which thwarted the peaceful exhortations of Gregory in Tuscany and Liguria, prevailed in other provinces; and the reader may be spared the fatigue of numerous transitions through the more obscure and less important vicissitudes of this stormy period. Yet one tragedy, which in its consequences deluged the principal city of Romagna with blood, will not be perused without interest. The noble families of the Gieremei and Lambertazzi of Bologna, the chiefs of the Guelf and Ghibelin factions of their city, had long been opposed in deadly animosity, when Bonifazio

Story of Imilda de' Lambertazzi.

Gieremei and Imilda, the daughter of Orlando de' Lambertazzi, forgot the enmity of their houses in the indulgence of a mutual and ardent passion. In one of their secret interviews in the palace of the Lambertazzi, the lovers were betrayed to the brothers of Imilda; she fled at their approach, but they rushed upon Bonifazio, immediately dispatched him with their poisoned daggers, and dragged his body to a deserted court. The unhappy girl returning to the chamber discovered his cruel fate by the stains of blood, and traced the corpse to the spot where it had been thrown. It was yet warm, and with mingled agony and hope she endeavoured to suck the venom from its wounds. But she only imbibed the poison into her own veins; and the ill-fated pair were found stretched lifeless together. This sad catastrophe inflamed the hatred of the two houses to desperation; their respective factions in the city espoused their quarrel; they flew to arms; and for forty days the streets and palaces of Bologna were the scenes of a general and furious contest which terminated in favor of the Guelfs. The Lambertazzi and all their Ghibelin associates were driven from the city; their houses were razed, and twelve thousand citizens were involved in a common sentence of banishment. But the exiles, retiring to the smaller towns of Romagna, were still formidable by their numbers; and offering a rallying point to almost all the Ghibelins of Italy, were joined by so great a force, that, concentrating under count Guido di 1276

CHAP. IV. PART I.

Montefeltro, they twice defeated the Guelfs, and filled Bologna with consternation. The reigning faction in that city adopted the usual resource of the times: they chose rather to sacrifice their liberties to a stranger than to submit to the vengeance of their fellow citizens; and imploring the protection of Charles of Anjou, they accepted from his hands the orders of a foreign governor and the protection of a garrison.

Papal jealousy excited by Charles of Anjou.

In selecting Charles of Anjou for their champion, the popes had vested him with powers which now threatened the independence of the church itself and of all Italy. In whatever quarter Gregory X. directed his exertions for the establishment of peace, he still found the ambitious policy of the Angevin monarch employed in counteracting his labours and in keeping alive the principles of dissention. This conduct of Charles was sufficient to excite the irritation and jealousy of the pope, and it was probably with the intention of restraining him by the establishment of a rival, that Gregory exhorted the German electors to give an efficient head to the empire which, since the death of Frederic II., had not been preserved from a state of absolute interregnum by the double nomination of feeble pretenders. The electors, following the advice of the pontiff, bestowed the imperial sceptre upon Rodolph count of Hapsburg, the founder of the present reigning house of Austria; and their choice was immediately approved by the pope, after receiving a promise from the new emperor to respect eccle-

Rodolph of Hapsburg, emperor of Germany. 1273

siastical privileges, to confirm the pretensions of the Holy See over its temporal domains, and to leave Charles of Anjou undisturbed in the possession of the Sicilies. That monarch therefore was still protected by the church, but the revival of the imperial authority was sufficiently unfavorable to his schemes of universal dominion in Italy. The slender power of Rodolph, whose family have survived to our times to rivet a yoke of iron on the necks of the Italians, was, however, unequal to the assertion of the same supremacy which the Swabian dynasty had exercised beyond the Alps, and he prudently abstained from hazarding his limited resources on the dangerous theatre of Italian politics. Yet Gregory had succeeded in discovering an expedient for holding the Angevin king in awe; and he was on the eve of accomplishing the plan nearest his heart, by engaging the emperor Rodolph and the greatest sovereigns of Europe in a crusade to Palestine, when he was seized with a sudden illness which terminated his life at the most glorious moment of his pontificate. 1276

Nicholas III.

After the death of Gregory X., and the brief reigns of three other popes, who successively closed their mortal career within the space of twelve months, the chair of St. Peter was filled by Nicholas III., whose pontificate is a remarkable æra in the history of the temporal monarchy of the Holy See. This pontiff, treading in the footsteps of Gregory X., though with less disinterested motives, displayed all the arts of a con-

His policy.

CHAP. IV. PART I.

summate politician in turning the hostile pretensions of Rodolph and of Charles into engines for the aggrandizement of the papacy. The continued authority to which Charles pretended in Tuscany and Lombardy as vicar-general provoked the complaints of Rodolph; and the preparations of the new emperor to conduct an army into Italy excited the fears of the king of the Sicilies. Nicholas assumed the office of mediator between them, and in that capacity obliged Charles to cede to the emperor the alarming authority which he had usurped beyond the frontiers of Naples. But while he enforced this cession of power which could no longer be dangerous when in the hands of a distant sovereign, he extorted from Rodolph, as the price of his interference, the absolute renunciation of the imperial rights over the March of Ancona, Romagna,—the old exarchate of Ravenna,—and all other fiefs which the charters and testaments of the early emperors and of the countess Matilda had ever bestowed on the papacy. By this act the states of the church acquired the same extent in central Italy which they possess at this day: but the papal authority was limited to the imposition of the same oaths of supremacy which the independent nobles and cities of this great territory had formerly taken to the empire. The popes therefore for two centuries longer stood only in the place of the emperors, and their general sovereignty did not interfere with internal government.

Cession of Romagna, &c. to the Holy See. 1278

The successful policy of Nicholas III. was not

confined to these measures; and his efforts to reconcile the contending factions at Florence, Sienna, Bologna and other cities of Tuscany and Romagna, were at least for a time more efficacious than those of Gregory X. had proved. During his life the power of Charles of Anjou was confined to his immediate states; but the death of the great pontiff destroyed the equilibrium. 1280 Charles hastening to Viterbo, where the cardinals had assembled in conclave, succeeded by intimidation and violence in seating one of his own creatures, Martin IV., on the papal throne. With the connivance of this pontiff the tyrant, by fomenting the troubles of Italy, had rapidly recovered his influence, and was even busily preparing for the transmarine expedition which he meditated against the Greek empire, when he was suddenly awakened from dreams of eastern conquest by a terrific revolt which the patriotic vengeance, the indefatigable activity, and the deep-laid machinations of one man had been silently maturing in his own dominions.

Affairs of Sicily. Giovanni di Procida.

Giovanni di Procida, a Neapolitan noble, the faithful adherent and confidential friend of Frederic II. and of Manfred, had ranged himself in the cause of his country or party under the standard of Conradin, and escaped, after the disastrous fate of that prince, to the court of Aragon: where he was received by Constance, and her husband Peter, with the favor which his loyalty to her unfortunate house might justly demand. But under the lapse of years, and even in this honorable and

CHAP. IV. PART I.

wealthy security, he could neither forget the tragical death of Manfred and of Conradin, nor the wrongs of his countrymen. His hatred of their foreign oppressors was redoubled and his hopes of vengeance stimulated, by the intelligence which he constantly received from the two Sicilies of the relentless and wanton tyranny of the conquerors, and the smothered indignation of the people; and he represented to the Aragonese king the favorable occasion which was before him for the assertion of his wife's claim to the throne of her father, Manfred.

The ambition of Peter was tempted by the prospect of acquiring the crown of the Sicilies; but, though his possession of the maritime countries of Catalonia and Valencia favored the equipment of a naval armament, the resources of his small kingdom were unequal to a contest with so powerful a monarch as Charles of Anjou; he was destitute of funds to defray the cost of a foreign expedition; and he dreaded to incur the papal displeasure by attacking the great feudatory of the Holy See. Procida, whose zeal was undaunted by obstacles and dangers, undertook the arduous and seemingly impracticable office of surmounting all these impediments. Converting the large possessions which he enjoyed by the bounty of Peter and Constance into money to expend in their service, he disguised himself as a Franciscan friar, and resolved to pass into the Sicilies to ascertain by personal observation the temper of his countrymen, and to animate their hatred of

their inhuman masters. In this dangerous mission he found the numerous and warlike followers of Charles too firmly seated in the provinces of the continent to admit the hope of successful insurrection; but in Sicily the prospect was more encouraging. In the cities and on the coasts the French governors and licentious soldiery exercised a stern oppression which they aggravated by every species of outrage and cruelty; but they were not sufficiently numerous to occupy the interior of the island, into which they only occasionally penetrated with their extortions and insults. The native barons and peasantry still therefore held in their mountains the remains and the love of independence; their courage was animated by the eloquence of Procida, and the expectation which he held out of foreign assistance; and so deep and universal was the abhorrence with which the French had inspired all classes of the islanders that, from the shores to the centre of Sicily, a wide-spreading conspiracy was organized with impenetrable secrecy. 1279

From the future scene of action, the unwearied Procida was borne on the wings of patriotism or vengeance to the court of Constantinople, with intelligence of the immense preparations which Charles of Anjou was making in the Italian ports for the invasion of the eastern empire. He impressed on the emperor Michael Palæologus the policy of diverting the arms of the Angevin king from Greece by exciting rebellion in his own states; and he received the promise of a large

CHAP. IV. PART I.

subsidy to provide arms for the Sicilians and to defray the expences of Aragonese succours. But Palæologus, who had reconciled the Greek empire to the Holy See, insisted that the consent of the pope should first be obtained; and Procida, still in the garb of a friar, hastened to Rome with an imperial ambassador. Nicholas III., the secret enemy of Charles, gladly listened to the project; and the skilful mover of these complicated intrigues at last returned in triumph to Spain, with a papal deed which transferred the investiture of the Sicilies to queen Constance. But he had scarcely landed, when the sudden death of Nicholas threatened the subversion of all his labours. The king of Aragon dreaded the hostility of the new pope Martin IV., the creature of Charles; he
1281 wavered; and Procida flew to Constantinople again to expedite the subsidy which might confirm his resolution. Palæologus had now no longer any terms to keep with the papacy. Martin IV. had already excommunicated him for relapsing into the Greek heresy, and converted the projected expedition of Charles into a crusade against his empire: he therefore cheerfully entrusted Procida with 25,000 ounces of gold for the secret diversion of the storm. The money was well expended for his purpose; it renovated the confidence of Peter, and he equipped an Aragonese fleet and army of 10,000 men, and sailed to the African coast, under pretence of attacking the Saracens, there to await the course of events; while Procida crossed over into Sicily, and tra-

versing the island in different directions and under various disguises, ripened the execution of his plots. Although the ramifications of the conspiracy had during two years embraced the opposite extremities of Europe, the secret had been preserved with universal fidelity; and it was at last an accidental outrage which provoked its appalling disclosure.

The Sicilian Vespers. 1282

On Easter Monday, in the year 1282, the citizens of Palermo were moving in procession according to an annual custom to hear the vesper service at the church of Montreal, three miles from their capital, when a young maiden of rank and beauty was brutally insulted in the crowd by a French soldier. The wretch was instantly sacrificed to the fury of the spectators, and pierced with his own sword; the Sicilians had been disarmed by their tyrants, but the moment of frightful retribution had arrived; the long stifled cry of vengeance was raised; the few French in the procession were overpowered and murdered, and the people rushing back to the city—while the church bells were yet tolling for vespers—possessed themselves of weapons, and began an indiscriminate slaughter of the foreigners. Not a Frenchman in Palermo escaped; four thousand perished on that first evening; the example was imitated in other places of the island; and the work of death did not cease until eight thousand French had been included in the horrible massacre of the SICILIAN VESPERS.

CHAP. IV. PART I.

General revolt of the island from Charles of Anjou.

This sudden tragedy had no sooner commenced, than Procida and his conspirators seized the occasion; and all Sicily burst into the flames of insurrection. Where the lives of the French were spared, they were driven out of the island; and, in less than a month, the national deliverance had been effected, and an invitation dispatched to Peter of Aragon to assume and defend the sovereignty of the kingdom. *

Charles of Anjou might perhaps still have recovered the possession of Sicily, if the ferocity of his temper had not wrought the spirit of the people to desperation. Unprepared for resistance, terrified at his great power, and finding that Peter did not immediately arrive to their assistance, they had scarcely expelled their op-

* The different version, which two classes of original authorities have given of the Sicilian Vespers and revolt, renders it not easy to determine positively on the real character of many of the attendant circumstances. Costanzo, and Giannone after him, would lead us to infer that the massacre at Palermo formed part of the preconcerted insurrection; but Bartholomæus de Neocastro, and Nicolas Specialis (in Script. Rer. Ital. vols. x. and xiii.) both contemporary or nearly so with the event, describe it as unpremeditated; while the latter even pretends to disclaim for his countrymen any previous intelligence with Peter of Aragon, who was accidentally at hand. But, besides many other objections to this account, its truth is invalidated by the answer which Giovanni Villani has recorded of Peter, when pope Martin IV. required him to explain the purpose of the armament which he was preparing—"that if one of his hands betrayed his secret to the other, he would cut it off." Altogether I believe that the narrative adopted in the text is open to the fewest objections.

pressors before they besought the clemency of Charles, and offered to return to obedience, upon condition that their revolt should be pardoned and their liberties respected. But the tyrant would listen to no accommodation, and vowed an unsparing revenge. Assembling the forces which he had prepared for the Greek war, he crossed into the island with five thousand gens-d'armes and a quantity of infantry, and laid siege to Messina. The people of that city, hopeless of mercy, made an obstinate defence, and the crafty Peter, after delaying until events had assured him of the constancy and resolution of his new subjects, at length came to their assistance. His squadron, fitted solely for war, was better armed than the fleet of half equipped gallies and transports into which Charles, expecting to find no enemy on the seas, had hastily thrown his troops; and the hardy Catalan sailors of Peter were commanded, too, by Roger di Loria, like Procida,* a noble

* The reader will be curious to learn the subsequent fortunes of the greatest actor in the deliverance of Sicily; but it is singular how scanty are the memorials which have been preserved of the latter years of Procida. He lived, however, to a great age, and evidently retained to the last his influence over his countrymen; for we shall find him, nearly twenty years after his first effort, still the successful champion of Sicilian independence, and at the head of the barons who, disdaining submission to the house of Anjou and deserted by James of Aragon, bestowed the insular crown upon his younger brother. We may therefore conclude that his long life was closed in the prosperity and honor, which he so well deserved of the Sicilians and their sovereign.

Giannone, on the authority

CHAP. IV. PART I.

Neapolitan refugee, who became the most famous admiral of his times. The haughty Charles was compelled to decline a combat under such disadvantages, and to save his army by a precipitate retreat from being cut off from the continent and starved in the island. He had just time to raise the siege of Messina and to carry off his land forces, when Di Loria appeared off the port; captured twenty-nine of the French gallies; pursued the remainder of their fleet to the Calabrese shore, where Charles had landed his troops; and there burnt the whole number before the eyes of the baffled tyrant. This exploit of Di Loria sealed the deliverance of Sicily, and firmly established Peter of Aragon, who had already received the insular crown from the barons at Palermo, in the possession of his new kingdom.

Naval defeat of Charles.

Peter of Aragon,—king of Sicily also. 1182—85

Last years of Charles.

Charles of Anjou had hitherto triumphantly advanced in a career of flagitious cruelty and inordinate ambition. He had unjustly won the kingdom of the Sicilies, and stained his conquest,

of Tutini, degli Ammâragli, has rescued from oblivion one interesting little circumstance connected with this extraordinary man. Learned as well as noble, Procida had studied medicine at the school of Salerno, and performed the double office of physician and friend to Frederic II. and Manfred. His celebrity must have been nearly as great in the science as in the politics of his times, if it be true that the Neapolitan archives contain, or *did* contain, a petition from one of the courtiers of Charles II. for leave to pass into Sicily to procure the medical advice of the venerable patriot. See Giannone, in his twentieth book, cap. 5. p. 56.

in the field and on the scaffold, with torrents of blood; he had founded and exercised a tyrannical influence over all Italy by the proscription of the whole Ghibelin party; and, with his formidable powers, the subversion of the eastern empire seemed an easy consummation of greatness. But his pride was now to be levelled with the dust, and the reverses and humiliation of his last years might offer to mankind an imperfect retribution for a previous life of successful crime. The destruction of his fleet was a fatal blow. With the command of the seas he lost the means of employing his great army in the Sicilian or Greek war; and this first disaster was followed by a long series of misfortunes and political errors. He suffered Peter of Aragon to amuse him, and to gain time for strengthening himself in Sicily, by futile and protracted overtures for the decision of their respective claims by a single combat; his eldest son was provoked in his absence to a rash engagement off the Neapolitan coast, and taken prisoner by Roger di Loria; and when he had himself at length equipped a great naval armament in the harbours of his Provençal dominions, his confidence in his own fortunes was gone. He consumed in irresolution, and in vain efforts to obtain the release of his son, the time which should have been employed in vigorous action; until, deluded by his enemies with hollow negociations and overwhelmed with disappointment and shame at the downfall of his grandeur, his

His humiliation.

CHAP. IV. PART I.

health broke under the conflict of inward agony, and he sank into the grave only three years after the revolt of Sicily. *

His death. 1285

Affairs of Lombardy. Rise of the Visconti.

While the Sicilians were preparing to cast off the yoke which they had so long endured, another revolution was in progress at the opposite extremity of Italy. The people of Milan and of great part of Lombardy elevated the noble house of the Visconti to sovereign power on the ruin of the Torriani; but a change of masters produced no

* Muratori Annali, A. D. 1268—1285. Sismondi, vol. iii. p. 394. ad fin., iv. pp. 1—49. (passim.) Giannone, bb. 20 and 21. Gibbon, c. 62. Mr. Hallam has noticed one instance of the inaccuracy of Gibbon's account of the Sicilian revolution, — his calling Constance the *sister* instead of the *daughter* of Manfred. But he might have particularized other errors of more importance into which that celebrated writer has here fallen. For example, disregarding the change produced in the disposition of the papacy by the death of Nicholas III., Gibbon speaks as if the revolt, when it *did* burst out, had been sanctioned by the Holy See (vol. xi. p. 342.); and the general colouring of his narrative throws a false light on the conduct of Procida. We are told that "fortune had left him nothing to lose except life, and to despise life is the first qualification of a *rebel*." Yet Gibbon might have learnt from Mariana (whom he quotes) that Procida was in the enjoyment of several rich fiefs in the dominions of Peter when he devoted himself to danger and toil (Historia de las Españas, b. xiv. c. 6. Hispaniæ Illustratæ, vol. ii. p. 621.); and if hatred to the Angevin tyrant was the master passion in the bosom of the stigmatized rebel, it had at least been kindled by the wrongs of his country. But the mind of the great historian was unfortunately little constituted to sympathize with the generous spirit of freedom; and his indignation against tyranny was reserved only for the encroachments of ecclesiastical power.

revival of freedom, and the descendants of the heroes of Legnano, after having sacrificed a glorious inheritance before the madness of faction, surrendered themselves a second time to the power of hereditary lords without an effort, perhaps even without a wish, for the recovery of republican liberty. During the sovereignty of Martino della Torre, the first signor of Milan, pope Urban IV., who was incensed at his alliance with the Ghibelin Pelavicino, had availed himself of a disputed election to the archiepiscopal see of the city in the year 1263, to set aside the pretensions of a member of the Torriani family, and to nominate in his place Otho Visconti, a Milanese canon of high birth. The injurious treatment with which Martino resented the partiality of the pope by plundering his favorite, drove the new archbishop to range himself with the party of the defeated and banished nobles. The chief of a faction rather than the father of his flock, Visconti maintained in exile a civil war against Martino and his successors for eleven years with unvaried ill fortune and unshaken resolution. But the noble outlaws whom he commanded were still formidable enemies; betaking themselves to mercenary service, as was common in their desperate circumstances, they had formed a well disciplined band of gens-d'armerie; and the archbishop, swelling their numbers with other adventurers, was at length enabled to approach towards Milan. 1277
Napoleon della Torre, the reigning signor, advanced from the city, also with his cavalry, to

CHAP. IV. PART I.

encounter him; but, despising an enemy whom he had so often defeated, he suffered himself to be surprised in the night, and was captured with several of his relatives,* while others of his house were slain in the rout. This calamity extinguished the fortunes of the Torriani. The maintenance of a mercenary cavalry and the expences of a long contest with the exiles had compelled Napoleon to impose heavy taxes on the Milanese; their affections were alienated, they rose in arms on the news of his captivity, and electing the archbishop Otho for their signor, they joyfully welcomed his return to their city with the noble exiles his partizans.

From this period Otho Visconti reigned at Milan with uninterrupted prosperity until the termination of his life. It does not appear that he abused the absolute powers with which the people had invested him; but his ambition was displayed in his projects for securing to his family the hereditary possession of sovereignty. Destining his nephew Matteo Visconti to succeed him, he first induced the people of Milan, ten
1287 years after his own accession, to invest him with the title of captain of the people, and afterwards obtained for him the same dignity at Novara and Vercelli. At a later period his influence procured for Matteo from Adolphus of Nassau, emperor

* Napoleon and five others of the Torriani experienced a fate which was common to the defeated in that age where life itself was spared. They were confined and exposed to public gaze at Como, a city devoted to Visconti, in cages of iron.

elect, the office of imperial vicar-general in Lombardy, and with it a claim to universal supremacy in the province over great part of which the archbishop himself possessed more substantial authority. Thus, when Otho closed a long and eventful life at the age of eighty-eight years, and in the full vigour of intellect, his policy had laid the foundations for the permanent grandeur of his house; and Matteo Visconti assumed without 1295
opposition the signiory of Milan and other cities of inferior importance.

Tuscany.

There is little in these vicissitudes of despotism to engage the attention of the reader; and I gladly turn to survey the condition of the Tuscan republics at the same period. In the decline of the Ghibelin cause after the defeat of Conradin, Pisa, whose strength lay on the field of waters, was unable to maintain alone a contest by land against Charles of Anjou, the Florentines, and other Tuscan Guelfs. She therefore cheaply purchased 1276
peace by receiving her own Guelf exiles back within her walls, and confiding to them a principal share in the government. The virtuous policy of Gregory X. had already reconciled the republic with the church; she was at peace with her ancient rival Genoa; and the Guelf nobles who returned from banishment, while their revenues augmented the public wealth, enjoyed their restoration to the bosom of their country in moderation and tranquillity. Thus released from foreign and undisturbed by domestic enemies, Pisa so far from suffering humiliation or loss of power by the

Grandeur of Pisa.

CHAP. IV. PART I.

forced pacification to which she had submitted, flourished with an astonishing increase of prosperity and wealth. The public security produced so rapid and immense an extension of commerce that, in the few years which immediately preceded her fatal war against Genoa, her revenues had doubled their former amount. The epoch of her meridian splendour, and of the sudden and total extinction of her maritime grandeur, is all contained within the narrow compass of three sum-
1281 mers. In the year before the Genoese war, her power had attained its greatest height; she possessed wealthy colonies at Constantinople and Acre, which carried on a great trade with the Greeks and Saracens; she was mistress of Sardinia, Elba, and great part of Corsica; and from all these foreign possessions, enormous wealth flowed both into the coffers of the state and of her private citizens. Among these Pisa numbered many lords who, in their fortunes and titles, in the extent of their insular fiefs and the pomp of their retinues, might rival the power and the magnificence of princes. *

* All the vestiges of departed grandeur which, in her decay and solitude, render Pisa at this hour one of the most interesting objects in Italy, belong to the epoch of her maritime glories. The booty gained in an expedition against the Saracens of Palermo in 1063 was consecrated to the erection of her cathedral; and this grand and imposing edifice, the earliest specimen of a style of religious architecture which, belonging neither to the Grecian nor the Gothic, is peculiarly Tuscan, was completed before the end of the eleventh century. The beautiful leaning tower or belfry of Pisa, and her noble Baptistery or church of St. John, are of the

This happy condition of the republic contained the germs of destruction. The general influx of riches and the rapid accumulation of the national resources cherished restless pride and overweening ambition; and in this spirit the Pisans were ill disposed to preserve any friendly relations with their old enemies and perpetual rivals the Genoese. The pursuit of the same commerce in the Levant, the clashing interests of their colonies on the shores of the Greek empire and of Syria, and their common pretensions to the sovereignty of Corsica, all kept alive the long jealousy and hatred of the two republics; but their last and decisive struggle was provoked by the wanton aggressions of Pisa. She protected the piratical enterprises of a Corsican noble against the vengeance of Genoa; her colonists at Acre instigated the people of that city to pillage and expel the Genoese residents; and her vessels insolently seized a Genoese galley on its homeward passage from Sicily. Satisfaction for these outrages was in vain demanded by the injured state, and both republics eagerly appealed to arms.

War between Pisa and Genoa. 1282

The first two years of the memorable contest which ensued were consumed in partial encounters. So nice was the equality of strength, and so

twelfth century; and the venerable cloisters which enclose the Campo Santo—the public burial ground of the city, the holy soil of which was brought from Palestine — were completed in the most brilliant and the latest year of her prosperity, 1281. Tiraboschi, Storia della Letter. Ital. vol. iii. b. iv. c. 8. Pignotti, b. iii. Forsyth's Remarks on Italy, p. 10.

CHAP. IV. PART I.

serious the mutual conviction that national honor and maritime dominion were irretrievably staked on the quarrel, that both Pisa and Genoa cautiously avoided its decision until they could concentrate all their forces for one gigantic effort. Their scattered seamen were gradually collected from the distant pursuit of commerce, their fleets were sedulously exercised in desultory operations, and while all their merchant vessels were embargoed in their ports for the public service, above one hundred new gallies were constructed by both parties. But while the great issue of the struggle still hung in suspense, several disasters were omens of the fading fortunes of Pisa. In the first year she lost in a furious hurricane above half of a squadron which had ravaged the Ligurian coast; the next naval campaign afforded no counterpoise to this misfortune, and yielded no advantage in return for a vast expenditure; and, early in the third summer, she experienced a double reverse. An expedition on its passage to Sardinia with troops and treasure fell into the hands of the Genoese; and the squadron of twenty-four gallies which convoyed it was totally defeated, after an obstinate engagement in which four of the number were sunk and eight captured, with fifteen hundred men.

These misfortunes only inflamed the Pisans with wounded pride and the desire of a signal vengeance. The treasures of the state were nearly exhausted, but the patriotism of the great families repaired the deficiency. They equipped

at their own expence some one, some two, others, more wealthy, five and six gallies; and one house even armed eleven. In this manner, by the public resources and individual sacrifices, an immense fleet of one hundred and three gallies was formed: —and yet the Genoese could oppose it with superior numbers. The armed galley of those ages carried from two to three hundred men, and above fifty thousand Pisans and Genoese were therefore to contend on the waters for the mastery: an incredible force for two cities with only a slender maritime territory, if the facts were not perfectly authenticated.

Battle of Meloria. 1284

The Pisan fleet was no sooner equipped than it put to sea, and, appearing before Genoa, insulted that city by a discharge of arrows tipt with silver. This curious bravado failed in provoking the Genoese, whose preparations were not fully completed, to sally from their port; but the Pisans had only returned to the Arno a very few days when they were followed by their enemies, who stationed themselves off the mouth of the river, near the little isle of Meloria, with above one hundred and thirty gallies. The Genoese admiral Oberto Doria, concealing thirty gallies behind the island, offered the Pisans battle with an apparent equality of numbers. The challenge was joyfully*

* The eagerness of the Pisans for the encounter was not damped by an accident which, in that superstitious age, might have terrified a more religious people. As their fleet was getting under weigh, the image of the Saviour, which surmounted the great standard of the republic, fell from its place.

CHAP. IV. PART I.

accepted, the Pisans descended the Arno, and the two mighty armaments closed—galley to galley—in a general and furious conflict. Every excitement of honor and courage, of hatred and despair, swelled the relentless carnage of that day; but there are few circumstances for relation in these naval combats, and the horror of one great scene of various and indiscriminate slaughter must be imagined rather than described. The battle long raged without perceptible advantage to either party—until the hidden reserve of the Genoese shot from behind the isle of Meloria, and bore down upon the fight. The vessel of the Pisan admiral, and a second galley which displayed the

"Sia pur Christo per i Genovesi, e per noi il vento"—"Let Christ be for the Genoese, and the wind for us," was the indecent reply of the mariners to those who noticed the ill omen. The story however rests upon the authority of a Genoese chronicler, (Folietta, Hist. Genuens. b. 5. In Script. Rer. Ital.) and is violently contradicted by a modern Pisan (Il Caval. Flaminio del Borgo, sull' Ist. Pis, diss. 11.), the strenuous advocate for the orthodoxy of his ancestors. But Pisa had certainly long laboured under the general stigma of irreligion. The rhyming biographer of the countess Matilda reproaches her for her connection with infidels, and regrets that the bones of the mother of the sainted countess should repose within her walls—"Huc urbs Paganis, Turchis, Libicis quoque Parthis sordida"—(see the 31st Diss. of Muratori.)

The faithful ally of the Swabian monarchs, Pisa was constantly at enmity with the church party, and we find her often receiving the excommunications of the popes with very philosophical indifference:—quite a sufficient explanation of the charges against her faith, and perhaps, too, a proof that they were not unfounded in times when religion assumed no other shape than blind submission to ecclesiastical tyranny.

great standard of the republic, were overpowered by this re-inforcement and captured; and, at that fatal moment, the too famous count Ugolino gave the signal of flight to the division which he commanded. The naval glories of Pisa sank for ever: five thousand of her bravest citizens had perished, eleven thousand more were conducted to a lingering captivity, and it became the common saying of Tuscany that thenceforth, he who would see Pisa must visit her at Genoa.

Extinction of the naval power of Pisa.

Count Ugolino della Gherardesca, on whose name and story the greatest of Italian bards has bestowed a fearful immortality, was the chief of one of the most distinguished families of Pisa, and had long borne a conspicuous part in the factions of the republic. Though his house had always been attached to the dominant party in the state, he had given his sister in marriage to the representative of the Visconti * family, the leader of the Pisan Guelfs. This alliance, which appears to have been dictated by projects of selfish aggrandizement, rendered count Ugolino justly suspected by all orders of his countrymen. His former friends of the Ghibelin faction viewed it as a desertion of their cause, the Guelfs received their new associate with the distrust and repugnance engendered by long animosity, and the most virtuous citizens of the state regarded the unnatural union of the two great houses with ap-

Story of Count Ugolino.

* The Visconti of Pisa and Milan were distinct families in nowise connected.

CHAP. IV. PART I.

prehension and jealousy. These feelings and the prevalence of Ghibelin influence among the people occasioned, in 1274, the banishment of the Guelf party and the imprisonment of Ugolino; who was only released to share their exile in the following year and to assist in their parricidal efforts against the city of their birth.

The pacification of 1276 restored count Ugolino, with the Guelfs, to his political station in Pisa; and, though his odious alliance with the enemies of his party and of his country was not easily forgiven by his fellow-citizens, he gradually recovered the former influence which his high rank and possessions had obtained for him in the state. He was associated with the podestá and another noble in the command of the Pisan squadron, and his flight from the disastrous scene of Meloria is attributed by the chroniclers of the republic to the treacherous design of enfeebling his country, that he might raise a tyranny upon her ruin. This accusation is, perhaps, scarcely borne out by the recorded circumstances of the battle, nor is it easy to reconcile the confused and perplexing narrative of the subsequent conduct of Ugolino. Yet we may collect from the general mass of evidence, that the bad ambition of this man was directed to the subversion of the Pisan liberties; that, if he did not promote the first disasters of his country, he traitorously converted them into engines for the security of his power; and that, by alternately intriguing with the opposite factions and by opposing difficulties to the ran-

som of the Pisan captives at Genoa,—whose return he dreaded—he laboured to perpetuate his arbitrary authority.

The defeat of Meloria presented a tempting occasion to the Guelf cities of Tuscany to complete the humiliation and ruin of the only Ghibelin state of their province. Florence, Lucca, Sienna, Pistoia, all ungenerously coalesced with the avowed purpose of razing the walls of Pisa. Forgetting the Ghibelin principles of Genoa, they allied themselves with her against the more immediate object of their hatred; and engaged to besiege Pisa by land, while the Genoese gallies should blockade the Arno. The unhappy Pisans could discover no better method of averting the destruction which threatened them, than by confiding the dictatorial administration of their affairs to count Ugolino, whose Guelf connections might conciliate their foes, and whose arts had probably instigated the hostility of that faction. The dangerous alternative relieved them from foreign conquest; the new ruler of Pisa, by address, by bribery, by the shameful sacrifice of the castles and territory of the republic, succeeded in dissolving the Guelf league; and for years after the state was subjected to his sway. But he at length fell: and the unworthy minister of retribution was the archbishop Ruggieri degl' Ubaldini, the associate of his iniquitous projects, whom he had refused to reward with a share of his ill gotten power. In concert with the principal Ghibelin families, the archbishop exasperated the people 1285

CHAP. IV. PART I.

by unveiling the treacherous policy of Ugolino. The tyrant was attacked in his palace, overpowered, and thrown into prison with his two youngest sons and two of his grand-children. After suffering the count and these four youthful victims to remain for some months in the usual state of confinement, the inhuman archbishop caused the key of their prison to be thrown into the Arno, and the Pisans left them to perish by
1288 hunger. In his last agonies, says the historian Villani, the count was heard from without confessing his guilt, but no priest was allowed to approach the "tower of Famine."—The crimes of Ugolino might have demanded expiation on the scaffold; but the atrocity of his punishment has deservedly branded his enemies with eternal infamy; and the horror and pity of mankind may still echo the stern reproach with which the indignant numbers of Dante apostrophized "the modern Thebes"—the murderess of his guiltless offspring *.

* Ahi Pisa, vituperio delle genti
Del bel paese là, dove 'l sì suona;
Poi che i vicini a te punir son lenti,
Muovasi la Capraia e la Gorgona,
E faccian siepe ad Arno in su la foce,
Si ch' egli annieghi in te ogni persona:
Che se 'l Conte Ugolino aveva voce,
D'aver tradita te delle castella
Non dovei tu i figliuoi porre a tal croce.
Innocenti facea l' età novella,
Novella Tebe, Uguccione e 'l Brigata,
E gli altri duo, che 'l canto suso appella.
Inferno. c. 33.

Affairs of Pisa after the death of Ugolino. 1288—1299

The fall of Ugolino threw the administration of Pisa entirely into the hands of the Ghibelins, and occasioned an immediate coalition of all the Guelf states of Tuscany against her. Since the death of Charles of Anjou, Florence had become the acknowledged queen of this party in the province, while the city of Arezzo under her bishop had declared for the opposite faction. This martial prelate at first raised the Ghibelin cause by his successes against the Siennese, but he was shortly defeated and slain by the Florentines at the battle of Campaldino, the most sanguinary encounter 1289
which had been fought in Tuscany since the engagement on the Arbia. After this event, the Pisans had to contend unassisted against the whole Guelf power; but notwithstanding the dreadful reverses which they had suffered, they maintained the war with heroic resolution.

——— Oh thou Pisa! shame
Of all the people, who their dwelling make
In that fair region, where the Italian voice
Is heard, since that thy neighbours are so slack
To punish, from their deep foundations rise
Capraia and Gorgayna, and dam up
The mouth of Arno, that each soul in thee
May perish in the waters! What if fame
Reported that thy castles were betrayed
By Ugolino; yet no right hadst thou
To stretch his children on the rack! For them,
Brigata, Uguccione, and the pair
Of gentle ones, of whom my song hath told,
Their tender years, thou modern Thebes, did make
Uncapable of guilt.

Cary's Translation.

CHAP. IV. PART I.

Choosing for their general count Guido di Montefeltro, one of the most celebrated captains of the age, they succeeded in a few years under his prudent and vigorous conduct in recovering, by force or stratagem, all the castles which Ugolino had yielded to their enemies; and they at last
1293 procured peace from the Guelf league upon honorable terms. They again restored their Guelf exiles to their rights, and granted the Florentines an immunity from duties in their port; but they preserved the ancient limits of their territory. It was six years later however before they could obtain tolerable conditions from their proud vic-
1299 tors the Genoese; and when the pacification released the surviving captives of Meloria from a miserable imprisonment of fifteen years in the dungeons of Genoa, they had wasted from eleven to less than one thousand persons.

Florence.

Notwithstanding the courage of the Pisans, they were less indebted to their own arms for their successes against the Guelf league, than to the domestic troubles which engrossed the attention of the Florentines. The provisions of the accommodation which Nicholas III. had effected between the Guelfs and Ghibelins of the republic had admitted the latter to a share in the signiory, and Florençe was for a short time governed by fourteen buonomini, of whom six were Ghibelins. But this division of power contained in itself the principles of discord; the executive council was constantly the scene of dissensions, and the weaker party were once more and finally expelled. It

would seem that this revolution was made the occasion by the commercial orders for strengthening the democratical character of the constitution at the expence of the nobles. Some of the latter order had found their way into the council of buonomini; but the executive power was now transferred exclusively to a signiory of six members to be chosen, for the six quarters of the city, one from each of the greater arts except that of the lawyers, whose judicial occupations already gave them an essential share in the public authority. This form of supreme magistrature lasted to the extinction of the republic, and may therefore deserve our particular attention. The six priors of the arts and of liberty, as they were termed, were elected every two months, and obliged to reside during their period of office in the palace of the state; which they were forbidden to quit, and where they were maintained at a common table by the public funds. The priors going out of office, jointly with the chiefs and councils of the seven greater arts, and with assistants named by themselves (arroti) chose their successors. But we shall find this form of election modified at a later period.

Creation of the priors of arts. 1282

Though the nobles were not yet restricted from entering the companies of arts, and though many of their order, enrolling themselves in these commercial bodies, ranked among the principal merchants of Florence, the majority of the ancient aristocracy were now wholly excluded from public office; and the members of government could

Lawless spirit of the nobles.

CHAP. IV. PART I.

only arrive at their dignity by virtue of a commercial and democratic station. But though the noble families could offer no direct opposition to the popular enactments which thus deprived them of all share in the government, they revenged themselves by outraging the public peace, and by habitually setting the laws at defiance. With insolent confidence in the aid of their numerous relatives, in the services of their domestics and various retainers, and in the strength of their castellated houses, the individuals of almost all the great families held the authority of the magistracy in open contempt. The peace of the city was constantly disturbed by the bloody feuds which divided the nobility among themselves; and they agreed only in oppressing the lower citizens. The latter had no protection from their outrages and assassinations. If the civic magistrates attempted to bring a noble criminal to justice, his whole family rose to rescue and protect him, and seldom failed to wreak their vengeance upon his accusers. The citizens were compelled to endure every injury from an order of men who were above the laws, and against whom no witness dared appear: or, if the people attempted to support their magistrates, the whole city was filled with uproar and slaughter.

Enactments against them.

The insolence and tyranny of the nobility at length excited the violent indignation of an individual of their own order, who had associated himself in one of the commercial companies. During his short period of office as a prior, Giano

della Bella seized the moment when the people were assembled in parliament to suggest and carry some remarkable enactments for reducing the nobles to obedience to the laws. The most effectual and praiseworthy of these was the creation of a gonfalonier of justice with a permanent guard of one thousand citizens, which was shortly increased to four times that number. The duty of this officer—the sword of the civil power—was to execute the commands of the magistracy and the sentences of the law. His guard was selected from the different divisions of the city, and distributed into companies, the commanders of which, termed also gonfaloniers, were resolved upon particular occasions into a college or corporate body which shared in the public deliberations. When the gonfalonier of justice hung out his gonfalon or banner from the windows of the public palace, the commanders of companies immediately repaired to him with their followers; and he marched at the head of this national militia against the powerful or refractory offender. The gonfalonier of justice was at first subordinate to the signiory of priors; but the importance of his functions shortly occasioned his elevation to an equality with that body, and terminated in placing him at their head. Like them he was elected every two months and resided in the public palace; with them he completed the signiory; and he was in effect the first magistrate of the state. *

* Mr. Roscoe has fallen into a strange inaccuracy in speaking as if the gonfalonier of justice was at a later period sub-

CHAP. IV. PART I.

Ordinances of Justice. Exclusion of the nobles from political rights. 1292

While this new institution was framed to curb the lawless spirit of the nobility, a less justifiable measure was adopted by the popular party against that class. They were declared incapable of ever holding the office of priors or of enrolling themselves in the companies of arts. Thirty-seven of the greatest families * of Florence were incapacitated by name from these rights of citizenship, and entered on the list of nobles or grandi. Thus, by a singular provision, the title of nobility was coupled with an exclusion from the enjoyment of public honors, and became not only an useless incumbrance but a punishment. At the instigation of Giano della Bella, it was provided by the same decree that, to guard against the intimidation of special witnesses, the voice of public report, attested by two respectable persons, should be

ordinate to the college of priors (Life of Lorenzo de' Medici, vol. ii. p. 51.); and Mr. Hallam, on the other hand, omitting to notice the steps of this useful magistrate's ascent to the presidency of the signiory, would leave the reader to suppose that the original constitution of his office placed him in that station. I have followed Sismondi, who has evidently bestowed great labour and research on the changes in the Florentine constitution; but this interesting part of Italian history is full of difficulties throughout, for the early Florentine writers, (Giovanni Villani, and the more ancient chronicler, Ricordano Malespini, whom he has copied) are seldom explicit and minute in their description of institutions which were familiar to their contemporaries.

* Though the number of *families* was so small, we find the individuals composing them reckoned by Villani, as high as fifteen hundred, all of whom were *grandi*, and shared the sentence of exclusion, the proscriptive distinction of nobility.

received as sufficient evidence against any nobleman.

It has been often and truly observed that these *Ordinances of Justice*, as they were styled, which deprived the nobility of political rights were scandalously unjust; and that the last especially was a violation of those immutable principles of equity which forbid us on any reasons of expediency to risk the sacrifice of innocent blood. In arming the executive power against the insubordination of the great families, Giano della Bella had been fully justified; and it does not appear that his zeal for the liberties of the lower people was sullied by any sinister views of personal aggrandizement; but his prejudice and animosity against the nobles were wrought to this persecuting spirit by the natural obstinacy and violence of his disposition. This defect of character occasioned his destruction. Many of the rich burgesses were jealous of his influence with the common people, and availed themselves of the imprudent severity with which he persisted in reforming some abuses of internal regulation among the companies of arts, to excite dangerous enemies against him. Deserted by the fickle citizens, he was driven, in little more than two years, into the exile in which 1294
he died. His banishment, says Villani, caused a considerable change in the administration of the state; the artisans and lower people lost their influence, and the government remained in the hands of the rich citizens. But the enactments which he had suggested against the ancient aristocracy

CHAP. IV. PART I.

remained in full operation, and became the lasting charter of the republic.

The exile of Giano della Bella procured little repose for his ungrateful country. Florence was still increasing in extent and opulence, and this is the era at which, in the pride of architectural embellishment, she followed the example of Pisa —the first Italian city which ennobled the use of commercial wealth by the magnificence of her public structures. The ancient palace of the signiory, the Palazzo Vecchio, and more than one pious edifice remain to attest the riches and grandeur of Florence at the period before us; yet the prosperity which is indicated by these splendid works continued to be alloyed by all the evils of faction. The spirit of the nobles yet remained to be broken by ages of proscription, and it was, above all, the elevation of the commercial aristocracy which they could least patiently endure. One of these new families, the Cerchi, which had amassed an enormous fortune by trade, eclipsed the ancient lustre of the great and noble house of Donati; and a law suit had already inflamed the rivalry between them, when accident afforded a pretext for political hostility. In the little Tuscan state of Pistoia, a private quarrel, between two branches of the principal Guelf family of the Cancellieri, had been attended with even more horrible atrocities than were usual in Italian feuds. The enmity of these relatives, to whose common descent some caprice had given the distinction of Neri and Bianchi (black and

Factions of the Black and White Guelfs.

white), was shared by numerous partizans; and the magistrates of Pistoia could only stop the effusion of blood in their streets, by committing the government of their republic to the temporary custody of the leading Guelf state of their province. The signiory of Florence impartially assumed the friendly office of restoring order in Pistoia, and removed the chiefs of both factions to their own city in the hope of thus reconciling them. But this imprudent measure only introduced the contagion within their own walls. When the strangers arrived at Florence, the Donati bestowed their hospitality upon the Neri, the Cerchi upon the Bianchi; the rival hosts who wanted only an excuse for open hostility eagerly embraced the quarrel of their guests; the example spread with fatal rapidity; and all Florence was speedily divided into the virulent factions of the Black and White Guelfs, of which Corso Donati and Vieri de' Cerchi were the leaders. 1300

Though the White Guelfs shewed in the sequel a disposition to coalesce with the Ghibelins, it cannot be discovered that any question of political rights was mixed up with the intestine hostility which now raged throughout Florence; or that the great parties, which owed their origin to this insufficient cause of division, proposed any intelligible object beyond the gratification of that factious spirit which was so congenial to the Italian temperament. The principles of public virtue could as little justify the White as the Black

CHAP. IV. PART I.

Guelfs; and the latter prevailed in the contest only because their leader Corso Donati, a bold turbulent designing man, was beyond all comparison superior in the arts of command and intrigue to his feeble rival Cerchi. At first the White Guelfs had the advantage and contrived to banish their adversaries, but they excited the enmity of pope Boniface VIII. by refusing to accept his mediation; and the pontiff who had enlisted a French prince, Charles of Valois, the brother of Philip the Fair, in the service of the church with the intention of employing him in the Sicilian wars, now dispatched him with his gens-d'armerie to restore peace at Florence under the new title of Pacificator of Tuscany. If Cerchi and the principal men among the White Guelfs had possessed energy and hardihood to break at once with the pope, they might easily have prevented the entrance of Charles into their city; but they hesitated, suffered him to introduce his gens d'armerie into Florence, and were ruined. Charles, disregarding his solemn promises, betrayed one of the gates to Corso Donati and the Black exiles, imprisoned the chiefs of the Whites, and suffered their palaces to be burnt, their property to be pillaged and confiscated, and several of their persons to be assassinated. After permitting, during five months, every disorder to the victorious party, and enriching himself with a share of the heavy fines which they extorted, Valois quitted Florence and Tuscany, pursued by the execrations

Fall of the White Guelfs.

of the province which he had entered to pacify. But before his departure six hundred of the principal White Guelfs, whose destruction he had effected, were finally proscribed and driven into exile. * 1302

Banishment of Dante.

One interesting circumstance in this revolution has deserved to survive the long oblivion of ages. Among the White Guelfs, who were included in the sentence of banishment and proscription, was Dante or more properly Durante Alighieri, who had held the office of prior while that party acquired ascendancy in the state. It was during a lingering and cruel exile which lasted unto his death, that he composed or completed his vision of Hell, Purgatory, and Paradise,—the Divina Commedia—one of the most sublime and original works of human genius. Seeking a refuge at the courts of the Della Scala, lords of Verona, and other Ghibelin chieftains, he tasted all the bitterness of dependence and poverty; † and, pouring out in terrific invective and political satire the indignation of a lofty and imaginative spirit which

* The authorities for the last twenty-three pages are contained in Muratori, A.D. 1263—1299. the 7th and 8th books of Giovanni Villani (Storia Fiorentina), the third book of Pignotti, and the first 125 pages of Sismondi's fourth volume.

† That he should find "how salt was the taste of another's bread, and how painful it was to climb and descend another's stairs," is the prophecy which he makes the shade of his ancestor address to him in Paradise.

Tu proverai si come sa di sale
Lo pane altrui e com' è duro calle
Lo scendere e'l salir per l'altrui scale.
Paradiso, Canto 17.

CHAP. IV. PART I.

had darkened in adversity, he filled the awful scenes of his great poem with the personages of contemporary history, and branded the crimes and dissensions of his age in numbers that will live for ever.

PART II.

Affairs of the Pontificate—Boniface VIII.—Continued Wars for the Possession of Sicily—Charles II. of Naples—Frederic, King of Sicily—Miserable end of Boniface VIII.—Translation of the Popedom to Avignon—Condition of Lombardy at the beginning of the Fourteenth Century—Frequent Revolutions—Numerous petty Signors or Tyrants—Power and Reverses of Matteo Visconti—Growth of respect in Italy for the imperial Authority—The Emperor Henry VII. in Italy—Submission of Lombardy to his Authority—New Troubles in that Province—Guelf League formed by Florence against the Emperor—Critical Situation, Activity, and Death of Henry VII.—Robert, King of Naples—His Projects of universal Sovereignty over Italy—Wars between the Guelfs and Ghibelins in Tuscany—Rise of Castruccio Castracani, Prince of Lucca—Hostilities in Lombardy—Successes of the Ghibelins—Siege of Genoa—Grandeur of Matteo Visconti—His Death—Successes of Castruccio Castracani—Danger of Florence and the Tuscan Guelfs—The Emperor Louis IV. of Bavaria in Italy—Brilliant Fortunes and Death of Castruccio—Rise of the House of Gonzaga at Mantua.

Affairs of the pontificate.

UNTIL the interference of Boniface VIII. in the Florentine troubles, I have not had occasion for some time to speak of the affairs of the pontificate or scarcely to mention even the name of a pope. From the death of Martin IV., which occurred immediately after that of Charles of Anjou, until the accession of Boniface, ten years later, there is not indeed much in the papal history to require observation. The intermediate period,

CHAP. IV. PART II.

which was filled with the reigns of pontiffs whose rapid succession deprived the Holy See of its usual influence in Italian politics, is remarkable only for the power which the noble Roman family of Colonna acquired by the favor of Nicholas IV.

Boniface VIII. 1294

But the intriguing and active character of Boniface VIII. renewed the ascendancy of the papacy. This pope owed his seat, on the willing abdication of his predecessor Celestinus V.,—a poor fanatic whom he afterwards persecuted to the grave—to the friendship of Charles II. king of Naples; and the support with which he repaid that monarch closely interweaves the affairs of his pontificate with those of the Two Sicilies.

Continued wars for the possession of Sicily.

During the contest between Charles of Anjou and Peter of Aragon, Philip III. of France, siding with his relative, had invaded the kingdom of Aragon, which Martin IV., by a sentence of deposition against Peter, had assumed the right of transferring to Charles of Valois, second son of the French monarch. Peter had thus to fight for the crown of Sicily within his native dominions, but he successfully defended himself; and, on his death, which was embraced in the same year with that of Charles of Anjou, of Philip, and of Martin, he bequeathed Aragon to Alphonso his eldest, and Sicily to James his second son. The general war languished for three years after the death of all these potentates, until a pacification was effected under the arbitration of our first English

1288

Edward. Charles II. of Anjou, who had remained in captivity since his defeat by Roger di Loria,

was released to assume his father's crown of Naples; but he made a formal cession of the throne of Sicily to James of Aragon, and promised to obtain a similar renunciation from Charles of Valois of *his* imaginary claims upon the kingdom of Aragon.

Charles II. of Naples.

Charles II. was no sooner at liberty than he violated all the conditions of the treaty; and pope Nicholas IV. at once placed the crown of the Two Sicilies on his head, and absolved him from the oaths by which he had sealed the pacification. Charles of Valois, too, refused to renounce his pretensions over Aragon, and the war immediately recommenced in all quarters. Attacked at once by the French, by the fulminations of the church, and by the king of Castile, who entered the league against him, Alphonso was unable to defend his inheritance, and could not be expected to sacrifice it to his brother's interest. He concluded a peace with his enemies, by which 1295
he promised to recall all the subjects of Aragon from the Sicilian service, and to exhort his brother to renounce the insular crown. On these conditions Charles of Valois was to abandon his pretensions, and the church, on receipt of a tribute, to restore the Aragonese king to her bosom. But Alphonso died immediately afterwards, and James, quitting Sicily and leaving the administration of the island in the hands of his third brother Frederic, assumed the crown of Aragon.

The first service which Boniface VIII. rendered to his patron Charles II. of Naples was to induce

CHAP. IV. PART II.

the new king of Aragon to conclude a shameful treaty, by which he not only confirmed the renunciation of Sicily but engaged, if the Sicilians should continue to assert their independence, to aid in conquering the island for the Angevin monarch. In return for these infamous conditions Charles II. bestowed his daughter on James, and the father of Christendom rewarded him with the investiture of Sardinia and Corsica, which, as belonging to the Pisans and Genoese, were not his to grant. But the Sicilians had too lively a remembrance of French tyranny, and cherished the love of freedom too warmly, to submit to the Angevin king, or tamely to suffer their rights to be bartered by the royal conspirators. The venerable Procida was still the adviser of the Sicilian barons when, solemnly abjuring their allegiance to the man who had basely deserted them, they placed the crown of Sicily on the head of his brother Frederic. The long wars which the ambition of the popes and of the house of Anjou had already occasioned for the possession of the island were now kindled anew, and cruelly ravaged both the Sicilies, continental and insular, for several years. Frederic, who proved himself an able and courageous monarch, at first carried his arms into Calabria, and, together with the invincible admiral of Sicily, Roger di Loria, gained several victories over the Angevin party. But successive misfortunes soon began to thicken around him: upon some disgust Di Loria deserted his service; his own brother James, as champion of the church,

Frederic, king of Sicily. 1296.

led an army into Sicily against him, and overran half the island; and, when the Aragonese sovereign, struck with tardy remorse for this cruel and ungenerous attack, at last withdrew his army and refused to be the instrument of his brother's ruin, Boniface VIII. enticed Charles of Valois from the distant wars of Flanders to another invasion of Sicily. But the patient valour and the solid talents of Frederic and the constancy of the Sicilians triumphed over every adverse vicissitude. Too weak to hazard a general engagement with the formidable army which Valois had led into Sicily from Naples, Frederic harassed the enemy with continual skirmishes, interrupted their supplies and communications, and left the climate to do the rest. Its ravages were so great that the French prince was compelled to evacuate the island; and Charles II. and the pope, at length despairing of their cause, concluded a peace with Frederic, and guaranteed to him for life the insular crown with the title of king of Trinacria, upon condition that he should hold it as a fief of the Holy See, to be restored after his death to the house of Anjou: an engagement which it was easy to foresee would never be fulfilled.

1299

1302

Miserable end of Boniface VIII.

Boniface VIII. survived this pacification only one year; and was visited in the miserable termination of his life with a just punishment for a career of pride and worldly ambition. The disaffection which two cardinals of the Colonna family betrayed in the sacred college had induced him to persecute their whole house and to expel

CHAP. IV. PART II.

them by treachery and by arms from all their domains. Philip the Fair of France—a monster of inhumanity whose subsequent proscription of the Templars has doomed his memory to eternal opprobium—afforded an asylum to the Colonna from enmity to Boniface; and this act widened the breach which several subjects of altercation had already occasioned between him and the pope, notwithstanding the attachment of the latter to the kindred house of Anjou. After some outrageous proceedings on both sides, Philip prepared a signal vengeance against the pontiff. He secretly dispatched a French knight with one of the Colonna and some followers into Italy to seize the person of Boniface, and probably to assassinate him. The conspirators arriving near Anagni where Boniface resided, and being joined by the partizans of the Colonna, surprised the papal palace which they held for three days. But while their leaders hesitated in irresolution on the fate of their captive, and their followers were pillaging his immense treasures, they were attacked and driven from the palace by the papal adherents. The pope was thus rescued, but only committed his person to the protection of the Orsini, the rivals of the Colonna, to find himself still a prisoner. Indignation at the first outrage, acting upon an aged frame and a haughty temper, had destroyed his health and unsettled his reason;
1303 and the fresh aggravation of insult threw him into a paroxysm of rage and insanity in which he died. Charles II. of Naples, a less unamiable character,

terminated his days more happily. The last years of his reign were laudably devoted to repair the evils of a long war; and he closed his life in tranquillity; leaving his rival Frederic of Sicily to survive him for many years and to renew the same contest with his son. 1309

After the violent end of Boniface VIII. the papal chair was possessed for a short time only by Benedict XI.; for this pontiff, a man of talents and virtue, had no sooner attempted to free himself from the thraldom in which the cardinals and Roman nobles designed to retain him, and evinced a disposition to resent the outrage which the king of France had offered to the Holy See in the person of Boniface, than he was carried off by poison. Philip the Fair, 1304 whose character has thrown probability on the accusation, is stated by a contemporary writer to have bribed two cardinals to the commission of this crime: he certainly reaped every advantage from its success. The death of Benedict was immediately followed by an event which long rendered him the real mover of the mighty engine of papal authority: I mean the removal of the popedom to Lyons and afterwards to Avignon. This remarkable occurrence in ecclesiastical history had probably been in a great measure prepared by the long and intimate connection of the Holy See with the house of Anjou. The influence of the Angevin princes had introduced into the sacred college many cardinals who were Frenchmen by birth; and on the death of Benedict there

Translation of the popedom to Avignon.

CHAP. IV. PART II.

was a strong French party in the conclave entirely devoted to Philip. The interest of the Colonna was thrown into the same scale, but the opposite faction were notwithstanding so nearly equal in numbers that, after a long struggle in which neither could command a sufficient majority for the cardinal of their choice, it was solemnly agreed that the tiara should be bestowed on some foreign prelate out of the pale of the college, that one party should name three individuals, and that the other should select a pope from among them. The anti-French party, preferring the right of primary nomination, carefully chose three prelates, all of them French, yet all declared and violent enemies of their sovereign. Yet this answered the object of Philip; his partizans immediately dispatched to him the list at the head of which was the archbishop of Bordeaux, and the king, hastening into Gascony and convincing this enemy in a secret interview that he could seat him in the chair of St. Peter, easily purchased his friendship and gratitude. The archbishop readily swore to the conditions required by the king as the price of his elevation, and the creatures of Philip were then instructed to declare him elected. The anti-French party anticipated a leader in the new pope, who assumed the title of Clement V., but they were thunderstruck when they found him the tool of Philip. Whether terrified by the fate of his predecessors, or influenced by the French king, Clement resolved never to cross the Alps, and astonished Christendom by a summons to the

cardinals to attend his coronation at Lyons. They could not refuse obedience, the ceremony was performed in that city, and thus commenced a separation of the papal court from the proper capital of its see which was to endure for sixty years: an æra distinguished for its scandalous disorders even in the polluted annals of the popedom. The reign of Clement V. was a worthy opening for this disgraceful period. At the expense of every other duty, that pope evinced better faith to his patron than might have been expected from the iniquitous nature of their connection, for he strictly fulfilled all the conditions of their simoniacal bargain. He absolved the king from all censure for his conduct towards Boniface VIII.; he filled the college of cardinals with his creatures; he suffered him to plunder his clergy; and he finally sanctioned and promoted the horrible persecution which the avarice and cruelty of Philip directed against the innocent knights of the Temple. * 1305 1307

Condition of Lombardy at the beginning of the fourteenth century.

In relating generally the transition of the Lombard cities from a republican independence to the government of signors or lords, I have purposely abstained from distracting the reader with innumerable and worthless details of the petty wars

* Muratori Annali, A. D. 1285—1307. Sismondi has given a very lucid and interesting account,—taken principally from the original narrative of Villani and the compilation of Raynaldus (Annales Eccles.)—of the pontificate of Boniface VIII. and of the intrigues which prepared the subsequent translation of the Holy See to Avignon. See his 24th and 26th Chapters.

CHAP. IV. PART II.

which occupied these obscure tyrants, or the petty revolutions which precipitated them from power: only to elevate rivals who pursued the same career, and usually shared the same fate. From the real extinction of liberty in Lombardy in the middle of the thirteenth century, to the period before us, I have no farther solicited attention to this part of Italy than to notice the contest between two rival families for the sovereignty of Milan; and the mode in which the capital of Lombardy passed from one master to another may convey a sufficient idea of the alternate changes of fortune which befel less celebrated usurpers and inferior cities.

Frequent revolutions.

There was a striking similarity in the history of most of the numerous despotisms of northern Italy. The turbulent and artful demagogue, flattering the passions of the multitude, or putting himself forward as the chief of a faction, first raised himself by the affection of the people or the preponderance of his party to the sovereign command. The solemn decree of the council of government or of the assembled citizens was in every instance carefully obtained to sanction his elevation. The signiory of the state was assigned to him, sometimes for life, sometimes for a limited period only. All the forms of a republic were still preserved, its magistrates, its councils, its popular assemblies; and the sovereignty of the people was acknowledged with outward respect while their real liberties were utterly destroyed. Thus the progress of the signor gradually accele-

rated from a cautious and measured exercise of authority to the undisguised assertion of unlimited and hereditary power, and from the temperate and conciliating use of that power to the wantonness and atrocities of a cruel despotism. But neither the protection of mercenary troops nor the uncertain fidelity of interested adherents could give security to the seat of the tyrant; the open hostility of exiled enemies constantly threatened his destruction; secret treachery among his party or even his relatives watched the ready moment of popular hatred to hurl him from his throne. Sometimes the gates were betrayed to the banished leader of a faction who cleared the streets and rode the city, as it was termed,* with his gens-d'armerie; sometimes domestic treason excited a sedition within the walls; and the cry of the conspirators was still the same, *Popolo! Popolo!* for the people!—the watchword of democracy. The citizens rose at the prostituted signal of liberty to shake off the intolerable yoke of the tyrant:—and immediately to surrender their happiness and freedom to another and often a more ferocious master.

Numerous petty signors or tyrants.

About the beginning of the fourteenth century there were almost as many signors in northern Italy, as there had been free cities. Alberto Scotto ruled over Placentia, Albuino della Scala over Verona, Ricciardo di Camino at Rovigo, Maffeo de' Maggi at Brescia; the lords of Correg-

* Corse la citta—Villani, passim.

CHAP. IV. PART II.

gio were masters of Parma, the Passerini of Mantua, the Ghiberti of Modena and Reggio, the Polenta of Ravenna, the Brusati of Novara; while the house of Cavalcabo governed at Cremona and that of Este at Ferrara, though in the vicissitudes of Italian politics that city was shortly to be wrested from them for a few years. Bologna and Padua alone were free: but the latter republic at length fell under the tyranny of the Carrara. In Piedmont two sovereigns of hereditary dominions had, late in the thirteenth century, acquired possession of many of the free cities; these were the counts of Savoy and the marquisses of Montferrat; but both these ancient and princely houses experienced the same reverses as were common to more ephemeral tyrants. Falling into the hands of the citizens who had risen against their despotic authority, both Boniface of Savoy in 1263, and William of Montferrat in 1292, were enclosed in cages of iron and ended their days in captivity.

Power and reverses of Matteo Visconti.

Very few of these Lombard usurpers were destined to found a lasting grandeur for their families; and their power was eclipsed, at the opening of the fourteenth century, by the superior and more extensive domination of Matteo Visconti, the lord of Milan. Since his succession to his uncle the archbishop Otho, Matteo had pursued a course of unceasing ambition and prosperity; he had acquired possession of the province of Montferrat, and his matrimonial connection with Albuino della Scala and the marquis Azzo VIII. of Este seemed to connect his security with theirs. But the

jealous animosity of Alberto Scotto proved more dangerous to him than these alliances were beneficial. The people of Milan were weary of his tyranny, and Alberto forming a league among the Lombard signors of the second order in favor of the exiled Torriani, succeeded in exciting a rebellion among the Milanese, and in effecting the downfall of Matteo. Expelled from the capital of Lombardy the chief of the Visconti gave place to the rival family della Torre, who resumed their power after twenty years of proscription; and the Milanese, concealing their slavery under the flimsy veil of popular suffrage, surrendered themselves to the 1302 will of Guido della Torre. *

Growth of respect in Italy for the imperial authority.

Such continued the state of Lombardy, when the intelligence of the meditated entrance of an emperor into Italy engaged the anxious attention and enlivened the projects of all parties. For nearly sixty years no German prince had descended from the Alps to assert the imperial authority in Italy; and, immediately after the extinction of the Swabian family, the Ghibelins, the natural adherents of the empire, had been almost every where overpowered and proscribed. Yet in the long period which had elapsed since the death of Frederic II., and notwithstanding the triumph of the Guelf party, the imperial prerogatives were

* I am indebted for this view of Lombardy at the opening of the fourteenth century principally to Sismondi, who has very ably condensed the tedious Lombard chronicles of this period (in Script. Rer. Ital.) into a general summary in his 26th Chapter.

CHAP. IV. PART II.

so far from having fallen into oblivion, or grown into contempt among the Italians, that the mere influence of a singular change in public opinion had elevated them in imagination above all former pretensions, and swept away the barriers which the resistance of ages had raised against their exercise. The revival of ancient letters in all the Italian universities had silently produced this strange revolution. An extravagant respect for antiquity was the characteristic of all the learned Italians of the times, but the lawyers and jurisconsults in particular were blinded with veneration for the Pandects and Code of Justinian, their favorite studies. The arbitrary principles of the Roman civil law were universally disseminated and implicitly recognized; the despotic rights of the Roman emperors had been proclaimed in the spirit of their decrees; and the conclusion was easy which transferred the exclusive and unlimited supremacy of the Cæsars to sovereigns who, though elected by a few foreign princes, were supposed to inherit their dominion over the world. Thus the German emperors gained infinitely more in their absence from Italy than the courage, the ability and the great power of Frederic Barbarossa, the Italian possessions, the numerous partizans, and even the virtues of his grandson, had ever been able to extort from their subjects.

The emperor Henry VII. 1308

This theory of the duty of passive obedience was most prevalent in Italy, when Henry count of Luxembourg, whose election to the imperial

throne had been confirmed by Clement V., prepared to require it in practice. The hereditary possessions of Henry VII.—a prince whose superior talents and courage were accompanied by several amiable qualities—were too small to admit of his exerting much real authority over the German princes, though he obtained the crown of Bohemia for his son; and he prudently resolved to seek a more promising scene of ambition and glory in Italy. At the head of a few German cavalry, he crossed the Alps, two years after his election, and his appearance in Lombardy immediately created a striking though transient change in the aspect of almost all Italy. His court became instantly crowded with the ambassadors of the different states and with exiles from every quarter; while almost all the Lombard signors attended him in person in the hope of gaining, by devotion and services, his confirmation of their dignities. Henry received the whole of these envoys and suitors with the same affability and favor, and without the slightest distinction of party; and publicly announced his intention of pacifying the factions of Italy. But he declared to the Lombard signors that their powers were illegal and must be surrendered, and these usurpers, aware that the hatred with which they had generally inspired their countrymen would second the intentions of the emperor, endeavoured to resign their pretensions with a good grace. They were rewarded for their submission by Henry with fiefs and titles of nobility; the Guelf

enters Italy. 1310

CHAP. IV. PART II.

Submission of Lombardy to his authority.

and Ghibelin exiles were indiscriminately restored to their homes; and imperial vicars were quietly admitted to govern all the cities. In two instances only was any hesitation evinced to receive the commands of the emperor. Guido della Torre, the lord of Milan, at first displayed some disposition to resist; but the approach of Henry was hailed with open rejoicings by the Milanese, and their tyrant, alarmed at the prospect of defection, made his submission; his rivals the Visconti returned to the city in the capacity of private citizens; and the Torriani remained within the walls in the same condition. The refusal of Albuino della Scala to admit the Guelfs into Verona was more successful; and either the remoteness and strength of that city, or favor towards a zealous partizan of the empire, made Henry overlook a solitary act of disobedience. The deputies of all the cities of northern Italy, except Venice and Genoa*, flocked to Milan to

* These maritime republics displayed their usual spirit of proud independence upon this occasion. "All the deputies," says the bishop of Botronto, one of the courtiers who attended Henry in his Italian expedition, "took the oath of fidelity except the Genoese and Venetians, and they said a great many things to excuse themselves which I do not remember further than that they came to this point, that pretending to belong neither to church nor empire, to land nor ocean, they did not choose to swear at all."—Nicolai Botruntinensis episc. Henrici VII. Iter Italicum (in Script. Rer. Ital.) vol. ix. p. 895.

The resolution, however, of the Genoese was lowered by the intestine troubles which agitated their republic at this juncture; and when Henry afterwards approached their city, they were not only prevented

swear fealty to the emperor, and he received in that city the iron crown of Lombardy.

New troubles in that province. 1311

The tranquillity which Henry VII. had laboured to effect in Lombardy by the deposition of the petty tyrants of that great province, and by a laudable impartiality between the Guelfs and Ghibelins, was too shortly disturbed by the consequences of his own necessities. His poverty and the rapacity of the German adventurers who had attended his standard, and whose services he had no means of repaying, obliged him to demand large contributions that disgusted the people, and every where converted the acclamations with which they had welcomed their deliverer into murmurs and open discontent. The dissensions, too, to which Italy had so long been a prey were incurable by any effort of conciliation. The Torriani and Guelf faction of Milan were the first to instigate the populace to an insurrection against the emperor; and all the Lombard cities where the same party preponderated imitated their example. By the aid of the Visconti and the Ghibelins, the sedition at Milan was quelled; the Torriani and their adherents were expelled; and thus the power of Matteo Visconti was in fact re-established. But it was only by force of arms that the Guelfs in the rest of Lombardy were temporarily subdued, and Brescia in particular cost Henry a long siege before it surrendered.

by their disunion from opposing his entrance, but even gave him an absolute authority over the state, and aided him with money and forces against the Guelf league.

CHAP. IV. PART II.

The fair fame of the emperor was clouded in these transactions by more than one act of injustice and cruelty, and he had no sooner quitted Lombardy than the Guelf cities revolted again, while he found central Italy filled with enemies.

Guelf league formed by Florence against the emperor.

The resolution which the emperor had expressed on entering Italy to pacify her factions had armed the greatest portion of Tuscany against him. The Florentines had already prepared to acknowledge his authority, when the prejudices which favored the imperial pretensions were overborne by hatred of the exiles whose restoration must be the consequence of submission to his orders. They immediately bestirred themselves to form a Guelf league against him, and extended the ramifications of their policy throughout the peninsula and even beyond its limits. Thus the signiory of a mercantile republic, always varying in its members yet still unchanging in its designs, conceived, perhaps for the first time, that idea of the balance of power which has become the regulating principle of European politics. Florence was the centre and the great mover of a Guelf confederation which embraced not only the Tuscan cities of her party, but those of Lombardy also, the Orsini and their faction in Rome, and Robert king of Naples; while the influence of France and of the papal court of Avignon was obtained for the same cause. On the other hand Frederic king of Sicily, the republic of Pisa, the Colonna at Rome, Cane della Scala, now the lord of Verona, the Visconti at Milan, and the

Ghibelin cities of Lombardy sided with the emperor. Evincing that defect of military valour which was ever afterwards strangely combined with a courageous spirit of independence, Florence mainly depended in this war for her security upon bands of those mercenaries whom we shall hereafter find, under the too celebrated name of *condottieri*, the lasting scourge of Italy; and she solemnly bestowed a temporary dictatorship upon Robert of Naples in the anticipation of his assistance. Yet, when the emperor was at her gates, her firmness continued undaunted; and Henry was compelled to turn aside from her walls. 1312

Critical situation and activity of Henry.

The emperor who had entered Italy in the hope of asserting an unlimited authority which was favored by the spirit of the age, and, as it would appear, with the intention of exercising his power to promote the public happiness, now found himself involved in a dangerous contest from which his small resources could scarcely extricate him with honor. The greater part of Italy had already leagued against him, and the doubtful adherence of a few Ghibelin cities and lords was hardly a counterpoise against the union and strength of his enemies. The energy of his personal character however well fitted him for the encounter with difficult and even adverse circumstances. He obtained some considerable succours from Germany, roused his Italian partizans to vigorous exertions, and, in the year following his appearance before Florence, had assembled a formidable army. A general war was now kindled through-

CHAP. IV. PART II.

His death. 1313

out Italy, and every prognostic indicated the maturity of a long and desperate struggle, when his sudden death completely changed the posture of Italian affairs. *

Robert, king of Naples. His projects of universal sovereignty over Italy.

While the unexpected death of Henry VII. deprived the Ghibelin party of its leader, and long wars between rival candidates for the succession to the German throne placed the imperial authority over Italy in abeyance, Robert king of Naples, the chief of the Guelf party, the possessor of Provence, and the favorite of the church, began to aspire to the general sovereignty of Italy. He had succeeded to the crowns of Naples and Pro-
1309 vence on the death of his father Charles II. in opposition to the recognized laws of inheritance. His elder brother Charles Martel, by his marriage with the heiress of Hungary, had been called to the throne of that kingdom and had died before his father. His son, Carobert, the reigning king of Hungary, on the death of his grandfather Charles II. asserted his just rights to all the dominions of that monarch; but Robert, hastening to Avignon, whither Clement V. had now removed his court, obtained from the pope, as feudal superior of the royal fief of Naples, a sentence which set aside the claims of his nephew in his own favor. The king of Hungary did not seriously attempt to

* Villani, bb. viii. and ix. passim. Sismondi, c. 27. But I have found the fullest account of the expedition of Henry VII. in the "Iter Italicum" of the bishop of Botronto (cited in the last note) which I see that Sismondi has frequently consulted.

oppose this decision, and Robert, a prince of wisdom and address, though devoid of military talents, soon extended his ambitious views beyond the kingdom over which he reigned undisturbed. Naturally inimical to the imperial pretensions, we have seen him joining the Guelf league against Henry VII.; and the death of that emperor left him every opportunity both to attempt the subjugation of the Ghibelin states, and to convert his alliance with the Guelfs into the relation of sovereign and subject. He would probably have realized his schemes of aggrandizement to their fullest extent, if the extraordinary talents and energetic character of several of the leaders, who started up at this crisis from the Ghibelin ranks, had not retrieved the state of disorganization and weakness into which that faction was thrown on the death of the emperor.

War between the Guelfs and Ghibelins in Tuscany.

It was in Tuscany that the storm first broke over the Ghibelins after the loss of their imperial chief, and that the first ray of success unexpectedly beamed on their cause. Florence and the other Guelf cities of the province were no sooner delivered from the fear of Henry VII., than they prepared to wreak their vengeance against Pisa for the succours which she had furnished to the emperor. But that republic, in consternation at her danger, had taken into pay a thousand German cavalry, the only part of the imperial army which could be prevailed upon to remain in Italy, and had chosen for her general Uguccione della Faggiuola, a celebrated Ghibelin captain. The

CHAP. IV. PART II.

ability of this commander, and the confidence with which he inspired the Pisans, turned the tide of fortune and rendered the republic formidable to her enemies; who displayed on the contrary an absolute want of energy and skill in the use of their great superiority of resources. Uguccione was every where victorious; and the Florentines who were dismayed at his successes, and king Robert who wanted to gain time to attack the Ghibelins in other quarters, proposed peace to the Pisans. The offer was on the point of acceptance when Uguccione, foreseeing the loss of occupation to himself, raised a sedition in Pisa to oppose the pacification, overawed the council of government, and acquired for a time a tyrannical influence over the state. The vigour of his arms reduced the Guelf people of Lucca to sue for peace; they were compelled to restore their Ghibelin exiles; and then Uguccione, fomenting the dissensions which were thus created within the walls, easily
1314 subjected one of the most wealthy and flourishing cities of Tuscany to his sword.

The loss of so valuable an ally as Lucca alarmed the Florentines and the whole Guelf party, and actuated them to serious exertion. King Robert sent two of his brothers into Tuscany with a body of gens-d'armerie; the Florentines and all the Tuscan Guelfs uniting their forces to this succour formed a large army; and the confederates advanced to relieve the castle of Montecatini which Uguccione was besieging. After concentrating all the Ghibelin strength in that part of Italy, this

great captain could muster only twenty-five hundred heavily armed cavaliers, while the Guelfs numbered above three thousand; and though the historians of that age seldom care to enumerate the amount of an infantry which was despised, we find that Uguccione could oppose only twenty to above fifty thousand men of that arm. Yet he gained a memorable victory near Montecatini, in 1315 which both a brother and a nephew of the king of Naples were numbered with the slain. This triumph rendered Uguccione more formidable than ever; but his tyranny became insupportable both to the Pisans and Lucchese, and a conspiracy was formed in concert in both cities; while his terrible presence repressed insurrection in Lucca, the same spirit broke out in Pisa; while he hastened his return to the latter capital, the Lucchese rose behind him; and excluded from both places and deserted by his troops, he retired to the court of the Scala at Verona. So Pisa recovered her 1316 liberty, but Lucca was less fortunate or wise, for her citizens only transferred the power which Uguccione had usurped to the chief of the Ghibelins, Castruccio Castracani degl' Interminelli, one of the most celebrated names in Italian history.

Rise of Castruccio Castracani, prince of Lucca.

This extraordinary man, who was destined to triumph through a brilliant career of successful ambition, had early in life shared the common fate of exile with the White Guelfs or Ghibelins of Lucca. Passing ten years of banishment, in England, France, and the Ghibelin cities of Lombardy, he had served a long apprenticeship to arms under

CHAP. IV. PART II.

the best generals of the age. His valour and military talents, which were of the highest order, were seconded by the arts of profound dissimulation and unscrupulous policy; and he had no sooner returned to Lucca with the Ghibelin exiles, who were restored by the terms of the peace with Pisa, than he became the first citizen of the state. His skill and courage mainly contributed to the subsequent victory of Montecatini and endeared him to the Lucchese; his influence and intrigues excited the jealousy of Uguccione and caused his imprisonment; and the insurrection which delivered Lucca from that chief, liberated Castruccio from chains and impending death to sovereign command. Chosen annual captain of the people at three successive elections, he at length demanded and obtained the suffrages of the senate
1320 and citizens for his elevation to the dignity of signor. By a rigid public economy, and by animating the military spirit of the peasantry who inhabited the mountainous district of Lucca, he had already husbanded the resources of that commercial city, formed numerous bands of excellent troops, and exalted the power and reputation of his state. Passionately beloved by his soldiery, whose affections he knew how to gain while he strictly enforced their obedience, and respected and feared by the people whom he governed without oppression, his acquisition of the signiory was but the preparation for future grandeur. Under his government Lucca enjoyed repose for some years; for she had, together with Pisa, concluded

a peace, immediately after the fall of Uguccione, both with Florence, and with Robert king of Naples. This monarch, after the disastrous issue of the battle of Montecatini, had found sufficient employment for his arms in other parts of Italy to increase his desire for the suspension of hostilities in Tuscany.

Hostilities in Lombardy. Successes of the Ghibelins.

During these transactions in Tuscany, the Lombard plains were still desolated by incessant and unsparing warfare. The efforts of the Neapolitan king were mainly directed to crush Matteo Visconti and the Ghibelins in this part of Italy; and immediately after the death of Henry VII. he poured his forces from Provence, in concert with the Lombard Guelfs, into the Milanese territory. But, though the confederates gained a battle in the first campaign, it produced little fruits; the following summer passed without any decisive event; and, in the third, the Ghibelins obtained a signal advantage by the utter defeat and ruin of the Guelfs of Pavia. That city fell into the hands 1315
of Matteo Visconti, and a general consternation seized the Guelf cities. Tortona and Alexandria submitted to the conqueror who already held Como, Bergamo, and Placentia, and the Ghibelin party were almost every where triumphant in Lombardy; while Cane della Scala, the lord of Verona, was equally successful against the Guelfs in the Trevisan March.

Siege of Genoa.

In this prosperous state of the Ghibelin interests the domestic feuds of Genoa attracted the tide of war to her gates. The ambitious rivalry

CHAP. IV. PART II.

of her four great families of the Grimaldi, the Fieschi, the Spinola, and the Doria, had long agitated the bosom of the republic; and at the period before us the two former who headed the Guelf party had, after various convulsions, gained possession of the government. The Spinola and Doria retiring from the city fortified themselves in the smaller towns of the Genoese territory, and immediately invited the Ghibelin chiefs of Lombardy to their aid. The lords of Milan and Verona promptly complied with the demand, and, joined by the exiles, a Ghibelin army under Marco, the son of Matteo Visconti, advanced into Liguria and laid siege to the capital. The rulers of Genoa could then resort in their terror to no other protection than that of the Neapolitan king. Robert, conscious of the importance of preserving the republic from subjection to his enemies, hastened by sea to its defence, and obtained the absolute cession of the Genoese liberties into his hands for ten years as the price of his services. The presence of the king and the magnitude of the object soon rendered the siege of Genoa the focus of Italian hostility. The combatants were mutually reinforced from all the Guelf and Ghibelin states, and a numerous gens-d'armerie was thus concentrated in the Ligurian mountains, though the nature of the country prevented that force from acting. The assembled Guelfs, however, were more numerous than their assailants; and, after the possession of the suburbs and outworks of Genoa had been obstinately contested

during ten months, the Ghibelins were compelled to raise the siege. But Robert had scarcely quitted the city to pass into Provence, when the exiles with aid from Lombardy again approached Genoa, and during four years continued a war of posts in its vicinity. But neither the Lombard signors nor Robert engaged in this fruitless contest, and Lombardy again became the great theatre of warfare.

While the first siege of Genoa was yet in progress, the Ghibelin princes had assembled a general diet of their party to give consistency to their alliance; and, forming a solemn league, they placed at its head Cane della Scala, whose talents and generous qualities had procured for him the sirname of the Great. But Matteo Visconti was in fact the leading sovereign of northern Italy. This wily chieftain had profited by the experience of former reverses to conciliate the affections of the Milanese, and to avoid the arrogance which had precipitated him from power. A cautious and consummate actor in the treacherous politics of the age, he was even more dangerous in negociation than in arms; and, while great part of Lombardy was subjected to his vigorous and temperate sway, his four sons, who were all numbered among the best captains of Italy, rendered him implicit obedience and contributed by their activity and talents to the grandeur of their house. Not all the machinations and efforts of Robert king of Naples, nor of his creature pope John XXII., could shake the power of Matteo Visconti.

Grandeur of Matteo Visconti.

CHAP. IV. PART II.

Clement V. had died * in 1314, and John XXII., who succeeded him after a vacancy in the papal see which lasted two years, and who had conceived a blind hatred of Matteo Visconti, not only pursued him with the fulminations of the church and the arms of her adherents, but instigated two invasions of Lombardy from France and Germany for the sole purpose of effecting his

* The crimes of Clement V. had provoked the general execration of his times, and his atrocious sacrifice of the Templars to the avarice of "the monster of France" was scarcely regarded with more horror than his iniquitous sale of church benefices. By this scandalous traffic, besides accumulating immense treasures, he had enriched all his profligate relatives and dependants; and the story of his death may confirm the trite maxim, that there are no ties but those of interest among the vicious. As soon as he had breathed his last, his whole household betook themselves to the plunder of his palace. Not one faithful servant was found to watch by his remains as they lay in state; and the tapers, by which the funeral chamber was lighted, setting fire to the bed, the body was half consumed before the flames were discovered. But so completely had the palace been sacked of its wardrobe, that no better covering than an old cloak was left to shroud the blackened corpse of the richest pope that had ever governed the church.

The pious Villani gravely relates an anecdote of Clement V. which, as Sismondi observes, is at least curious as a proof of the public opinion of this pontiff. On the death of his favorite nephew, a cardinal, he was anxious to ascertain the fate of his soul, and a zealous chaplain undertook to satisfy his master by permitting a famous magician to transport him to the other world. On his return from this singular mission he reported that he had seen the cardinal-nephew suffering the punishment of simony in a palace of flames, and devils busily constructing a similar mansion beside it, which they informed him was destined for the pope himself. His Holiness, says Villani, after receiving this terrific announcement from his chaplain was never seen to smile again. Giov. Villani, b. ix. p. 471.

destruction. At the persuasion of the pope, Philip of Valois, son of that Charles who had formerly appeared in Italy with so much discredit, undertook a similar expedition under papal auspices. But he had scarcely entered Lombardy 1320
when Galeazzo and Marco Visconti enclosed his army between the Tesino and the Po, and, partly by the dread of famine, partly by tempting his avarice with large presents, induced him to a dishonorable evacuation of Italy. After this failure the pope engaged Frederic of Austria, one of the candidates for the imperial throne, to purchase his favor by a like diversion in support of the Guelf 1322
cause; but Visconti had the art to convince Frederic that the ruin of a Ghibelin chieftain would ill advance his future interests in Italy, and the German prince recalled his troops. Matteo, who had attained a great age, survived his escape from this last danger no more than a month: after passing many years of his life in contempt of spiritual censures, and triumphing over the temporal hostility of the papal party, he viewed his approaching end with terror, and died while endeavouring to reconcile himself with the church. His death.

Successes of Castruccio Castracani.

The reinforcements which Florence and the Tuscan Guelfs sent to Philip of Valois in his expedition against the Ghibelins of Lombardy, afforded Castruccio Castracani an excuse for recommencing hostilities in Tuscany. He had not suffered several years of peace to elapse without profiting by them to augment his resources and

CHAP. IV. PART II.

discipline his soldiery; and, under pretence of punishing the Florentines for their infraction of neutrality, he broke into their territory with fire
1322 and sword, and possessed himself of several of their castles. But his views in the prosecution of this war were directed to more important acquisitions; and, notwithstanding his alliance with Pisa, he took advantage of his having an army in the field to make a treacherous attempt to surprise that city, while her noble and popular factions were combating each other within the walls. This act of base ingratitude towards a state which had rendered him valuable assistance against his enemies met with no success, for the Pisans, forgetting their dissensions at his approach, easily held their gates against him. Though the perfidy of Castruccio determined Pisa to renounce his alliance, the war still continued in Tuscany for three years without any decided advantage. During that period however the Ghibelin leader was weaving his toils about the little Guelf city of Pistoia, a member of the Florentine alliance; and he was at length admitted into the place by
1325 the treason of a demagogue who sold the signiory to him.

Danger of Florence and the Tuscan Guelfs.

This acquisition, which was highly dangerous to Florence, produced such alarm in that republic that she called out her whole native force for the more vigorous prosecution of the war; and so great were her population and resources that besides fifteen hundred French cavalry in her pay,

and one thousand Florentine gentlemen who mounted and served at their own cost as men at arms, she maintained fifteen thousand native infantry; her Guelf allies contributed fifteen hundred men at arms. On the other hand though Castruccio at last took a body of a thousand gens-d'armerie into his pay under Azzo Visconti, he was still very inferior in numbers; but his talents more than compensated for the disparity of force. During the whole campaign he evinced the skill of a consummate general; and had already filled his enemies with apprehension, when both armies drew out to decide the event of the war near the castle of Altopascio. The Florentine cavalry, their Guelf allies, and their mercenaries fled almost at the first charge; and though the republican infantry made as vigorous a resistance as was possible against the gens-d'armerie of Castruccio, he gained a complete victory. The Florentine general, many French captains, and a great number of persons of distinction were taken prisoners; the whole Florentine territory was ravaged and plundered; and the conqueror carried his insults to the gates of the capital. Then returning to Lucca with an immense booty, he made his triumphal entry into that city with his captives and the carroccio of Florence which had fallen into his hands.

In the ruin which threatened the Guelf party in Tuscany, the Florentines had recourse to king Robert of Naples with entreaties for aid. This monarch after remaining in Provence for several

CHAP. IV. PART II.

years in apparent insensibility to the continued misfortunes of his allies, had now returned by sea to Naples; but he would only yield assistance to Florence upon condition that his absolute command over the republic, which had expired in 1321, should be renewed for ten years in favor of his son Charles, duke of Calabria, with the annexation of a large revenue. The Florentines, after cautiously stipulating for the preservation of their liberties, acceded to these conditions, and

1326 Charles arrived in Tuscany with a body of two thousand men at arms. His presence placed Florence in security against Castruccio, but, instead of attacking that chieftain, he employed himself solely in extending his own authority over the lesser Guelf cities. While he was thus occupied a new storm threatened the Guelf party; and the approach of the emperor Louis IV. of Bavaria animated the Ghibelins to increased efforts for completing the ruin of their opponents.

Expedition of the emperor Louis IV. of Bavaria into Italy.

After a long contest for the crown of Henry VII., Louis of Bavaria had triumphed over his rival Frederic of Austria, and taken him prisoner at the sanguinary battle of Muhldorf in 1322. Having since passed five years in confirming his authority in Germany, Louis was now tempted by ambition and cupidity to undertake an expedition

1327 into Italy. On his arrival in Lombardy the affairs of that great province demanded his first attention. Crossing the Alps with only a few German horse, he was immediately joined by all the Ghibelin princes, and received the Lombard crown

at Milan. But though he had entered Italy as the leader of the Ghibelins, his first act after this ceremony was to depose the greatest chieftain of the faction, and to inflict one more reverse upon the house of Visconti. The history of that family for the few preceding years will afford a necessary explanation of this vicissitude.

Notwithstanding the great power of Matteo Visconti, his eldest son Galeazzo did not find the inheritance which he had bequeathed an easy ac- 1322
quisition. By the disaffection of the Milanese and the infidelity of the German condottieri of Matteo, Galeazzo was even for a short time expelled from Milan; and when the mercenaries by declaring again for him established his power, his destruction was threatened by a formidable Guelf army which under a papal legate laid siege to Milan. From this danger he was delivered by Louis of Bavaria who, sending his ambassadors for the first time into Italy, took Galeazzo under his protection, and commanded the other Ghibelin lords in the imperial name to relieve the Milanese signor. The legate was compelled to withdraw his army, and from that period Galeazzo gradually regained the power which his father had acquired. But the protection which the emperor had afforded him so exasperated pope John XXII. that he not only excommunicated Louis, but declared him incapable of ever holding the imperial sceptre. The continued animosity between his protector and the pope did not, however, prevent Galeazzo Visconti from endeavouring to reconcile

himself with the court of Avignon. The discovery of his secret negociations for this purpose was assigned by Louis on his arrival at Milan as a reason for depriving him of his states. Corrupting the leaders of the mercenaries in the Milanese service, the emperor threw Galeazzo with his brothers and sons into prison; and, establishing at Milan the vain image of a republic under an imperial lieutenant, he extorted enormous contributions from the citizens.

It does not appear that this deposition of the greatest Ghibelin lord of Italy occasioned any displeasure in the other chieftains; and Louis, after obtaining a large grant of money from them, proceeded with the troops which they afforded him into Tuscany on his march to Rome, where he intended to receive the imperial crown. He was welcomed with joy by the signor of Lucca, and the superior genius of Castruccio at once acquired the entire ascendant over the weaker mind of Louis. Against the united forces of the emperor and of Castruccio, the duke of Calabria and his Guelf army cautiously maintained themselves on the defensive; but the passage of Louis through Tuscany was attended with disastrous consequences to the most famous Ghibelin city of that province. Since the fatal war of Meloria, Pisa had in effect ceased to be a maritime state; her gallies no longer appeared on the waters, her foreign commerce rapidly dwindled into extinction; and of the dependancies of her naval power the great island of Sardinia alone remained to her.

Directing her attention exclusively to continental affairs, and cheerfully making every sacrifice to the cause which she had espoused for ages, she was still the greatest and almost the only support of the Ghibelin interests in Tuscany, when Castruccio formed his treacherous design upon her liberty. She had then adopted a cautious neutrality, and it was at this dangerous crisis in her fortunes that she was called upon to defend the last remnant of her maritime grandeur. Though Boniface VIII. had unjustly attached the investiture of Sardinia to the Aragonese crown, James of Aragon made no attempt against that island; but his son Alphonso now invaded it with a formidable armament, and, after some brave but ineffectual efforts which only exhausted her remaining resources, Pisa was compelled, in 1325, to abandon it to his government. In the decay of her fortunes the republic had more reason than ever to dread the projects of Castruccio, and his alliance with the emperor. After vainly endeavouring to purchase exemption from the presence of Louis, she closed her gates against his forces, united as they were with those of her enemy. But her resistance was ineffectual, and after enduring a month's siege her governors were compelled by popular clamour to submit to the emperor. She thus fell in reality into the hands of Castruccio, who shortly established his absolute authority over her capital and territory.

After extorting a heavy contribution from the Pisans, and rewarding the services of Castruccio

CHAP. IV. PART II.

by erecting the state of Lucca into an imperial duchy in his favor, the rapacious emperor pursued his march to Rome. There he consumed in the frivolous ceremony of his coronation, and in the vain endeavour to establish an antipope, the time which he might have employed, with the forces at his command and in conjunction with Frederic king of Sicily, in crushing for ever the power of Robert of Naples and of all the Guelfs of Italy, who depended on that monarch. But while he slumbered, his great adherent Castruccio was recalled by the hostility of the Florentines into Tuscany, where he drove his enemies as usual from the field. Prince of Lucca and of an extensive territory which boasted three hundred castles, and signor of Pisa, Castruccio Castracani had now attained an elevation which seemed to threaten at no distant period the total subjugation of all Italy. Still in the prime of life, and in the full enjoyment of bodily and mental vigour, no schemes of future grandeur might appear too arduous to the extraordinary man * who had already from a humble outset effected so much;

Brilliant fortunes

* Upon one memorable occasion Castruccio betrayed the extent of his ambitious views under the veil of resignation to Heaven. At the coronation of Louis he bore the sword of state before the emperor as count of the Lateran, and by the magnificence of his decorations eclipsed the splendour of his sovereign. Two mottos were emblazoned on his robes of scarlet silk: the one, "Egli è come Dio vuole," "He is that which God has willed;" the other, "E si sarà quello che Dio vorrà"—"*He shall be that which God shall please.*" Villani, b. 10. p. 636.

but in the midst of this brilliant prosperity he was suddenly hurried to the grave by a violent fever. His death had an immediate influence upon the condition of all Tuscany. Florence breathed again from impending oppression, Pisa recovered her freedom, and Lucca sank from ephemeral splendour into lasting obscurity.

and death of Castruccio. 1328

By the death of Castruccio, the emperor had lost his best counsellor and firmest support; and he soon ceased to be formidable to the Guelfs. His subsequent operations were only calculated to fill Italy with the remembrance of his ingratitude and shameful avarice. Hastily returning into Tuscany, he plundered the infant orphans of Castruccio of their inheritance to sell Lucca to a new signor, and to impose ruinous contributions upon the Pisans, before his return into Lombardy delivered them from tyranny. While these and preceding acts of extortion and cruelty rendered Louis hateful and even despicable in the eyes of his own party, the mutiny of a body of his German mercenaries left him nearly powerless; and he had retained little influence and less respect in Italy when the intelligence of new troubles in his German dominions obliged him to abandon Lombardy and recross the Alps, to defend his imperial crown. 1330

The first proceeding of Louis in Lombardy had been to ruin the Visconti and to drain their states of money; almost his last act in the province was to make the restoration of this family to power a new source of profit. At the solicitation

CHAP. IV. PART II.

of Castruccio he had released Galeazzo and his relatives from the dungeons of Milan, and the once powerful lord of that and seven other great cities died miserably, a poor soldier in the pay of the prince of Lucca, a short time before the death of Castruccio himself. To his son Azzo, Louis restored the signiory of Milan upon condition that a large sum of money should be raised in his lordship and paid to the emperor. Thus the Visconti began once again to recover their grandeur. The restoration of Azzo was immediately followed by a shocking tragedy in the palace of the tyrant. His uncle Marco Visconti, the most warlike of the sons of Matteo, returning from his exile to Milan, was so warmly greeted with the acclamations of the people as to awaken the jealous apprehension of the signor. Inviting Marco and his other relatives to a sumptuous banquet, Azzo drew his uncle at its conclusion into a private apartment, and there gave the signal to assassins, who rushed on him, strangled him, and cast his body from the windows of the palace into the public square.

Rise of the house of Gonzaga at Mantua.

Just at the epoch of the restoration of Azzo Visconti to the signiory of Milan, Lombardy was the scene of another vicissitude which may deserve our notice from the durability of its effects. The family of the Passerini had governed Mantua with absolute and unresisted authority for forty years, when the brutal arrogance of the son of the reigning signor produced the ruin of his house. One of three young men of the noble family of

Gonzaga, who were his relatives and associates in debauchery, having excited his jealousy in an affair of licentious gallantry, he swore in the insolence of his anger to take a horrible revenge upon the wife of his rival. The threat excited the indignation and alarm of the three brothers; they immediately conspired against its author and his whole house, and, obtaining some men at arms, rode the city and called upon the citizens to throw off the yoke of the Passerini who had loaded them with taxes. The call was obeyed; the signor of Mantua was killed in the fray, and his son was thrown into prison, and there murdered by a young nobleman whose father he had consigned to death in the same dungeon. The three young Gonzaga proclaimed their father signor of Mantua, and thus founded a dynasty which was destined to preserve its power to the commencement of the eighteenth century. *

* My principal authority for the period between the death of the emperor Henry VII. and the departure of Louis of Bavaria from Italy is still Giovanni Villani. Besides the Annals of Muratori, I have recurred to the 9th and 10th (the first 146 cap.) books of the Florentine historian, and the 3rd book of the modern compilation of the accurate Pignotti. But indeed Sismondi (the first 193 pages of his fifth volume) has with his usual correctness so well extracted the essence of Villani's history of this period as almost to supersede the necessity of reference to the original, except as a general duty.

I once thought to have numbered Machiavelli's Life of Castruccio Castracani among the authorities in Italian history. I read it many years ago without suspicion that it was no more than a political romance; and a delightful romance it is.

PART III.

*Domestic Affairs of Florence—Changes in her Constitution—Sudden Power acquired in Italy by John, King of Bohemia—League excited by Florence against him—Success of the Confederates—Abandonment of Italy by the King of Bohemia—Treachery and Power of Mastino della Scala, Lord of Verona—League formed by Florence and Venice against him—His Humiliation—Prosperity of Florence—War with Pisa—Discontent at Florence—Arrival of the Duke of Athens in the City—His Elevation to Power—Subversion of the Republic—Florence under the Tyranny of the Duke of Athens—Numerous Conspiracies against him—Fall of the Tyrant—Restoration of Freedom—Affairs of Naples and Sicily—Last Years and Death of Robert King of Naples—Joanna Queen of Naples—Murder of her Husband Andrew—Louis King of Hungary, the Avenger of his Brother Andrew—His Conquest of Naples—Subsequent War and Pacification between Joanna and Louis—Re-establishment of Joanna in her Kingdom—State of Rome during the Absence of the Popes at Avignon—Private Wars and Crimes of the Nobles—Cola di Rienzi—Excites the Citizens to a successful Insurrection—His Government as Tribune of the People—Good Effects of the Revolution—Extraordinary Reputation of Rienzi—Enthusiasm of Petrarch—Errors and Fall of the Tribune—His subsequent Fortunes, second Administration, and violent Death—General Dearth in Europe in the Middle of the Fourteenth Century, followed by the Great Pestilence—Frightful Ravages of the latter in Italy—*REPUBLICS OF GENOA AND VENICE—*Their Rivalry—Sovereignty over the Adriatic asserted by Venice—Annual Ceremony of wedding the Adriatic—Wars between Genoa and Venice—Changes in the Venetian Constitution—Closing of the Great Council—Final Establishment of the Oligarchy—Conspiracies against its Usurpations*

—Institution of the Council of Ten—Its despotic Powers—Increased Vigour of the Republic under its Direction—Its mysterious Tyranny over Venice—Domestic Fortunes of Genoa—Creation of the first Doge.

CHAP. IV. PART III. Domestic affairs of Florence.

In noticing the prominent vicissitudes which rapidly succeeded each other during the long and furious wars of the age before us, I have avoided a partial reference to the internal condition of Florence. But while she was acting the conspicuous part which we have seen in the general politics of Italy, she was gradually adopting some farther modifications of her constitution which I have reserved to exhibit at a single view. In the quarrel of the Black and White Guelfs at the beginning of the century, the triumph of the former faction might appear to revive the influence of the ancient nobility, who, with their leader Corso Donati, were most conspicuous in these troubles. But though all the efforts of the White exiles were ineffectual to obtain by solicitation and conspiracy their readmission to the rights of citizenship, Corso Donati found that the ascendancy of his party did not produce for him the tyrannical power at which he aimed. The noble families of the Black faction, instead of serving his ends, displayed so great a jealousy of his authority that he broke off his connection with them in disgust, and endeavoured to excite new disorders by the intrigues which he directed against his former associates. Rearing himself in defiance to the sig-

CHAP. IV. PART III.

niory, and assuming a bold and dangerous demeanour which justly challenged suspicion, he was accused by the priors in 1308 of aspiring at a tyranny. He replied to the charge by fortifying himself with his retainers in his palace; and the gonfalonier of justice, his militia, and the citizens, who cheerfully obeyed the call of their governors, immediately proceeded to attack his residence. After an ineffectual resistance he fled, was taken, and anticipated a public execution by destroying himself.

After the fall of this ambitious noble, Florence was still encompassed with dangers from the enterprises of restless and desperate exiles, and the hostility of neighbouring states. Yet the ardent spirit of independence and the activity which animated her citizens successfully protected their own liberties even in the midst of defeats, and rendered the republic in some measure the guardian of the balance of power in Italy. We have seen her however more than once necessitated by the pressure of foreign war to adopt the most hazardous of all measures, that of suspending the public rights under a temporary dictatorship. Neither the precautionary stipulation that the signor should alter no part of the republican constitution, nor the sanctity of the oaths by which he was bound, could divest this expedient of the most perilous tendency. In consigning the signiory to king Robert, the Florentines might deem his power the less alarming, as the prosecution of

foreign hostilities left him little leisure for attempting to perpetuate a despotic authority in their city; but they had more reason to apprehend the designs of his son, Charles duke of Calabria, who, even while Castruccio threatened their frontiers, employed himself in strengthening his own power in Tuscany instead of defending their territory. The death of Castruccio freed the Florentines from the necessity of foreign aid, and, just at this epoch, the republic was fortunately relieved from the presence of a signor, who was no longer useful and might be dangerous, by the sudden death of the duke of Calabria.

Changes in her constitution.

The first use which the Florentines made of the revival of their political rights after this event was to perfect some changes in their constitution, which they had commenced five years before. The renewal of the principal offices of magistracy every second month had constantly filled the city with intrigues and ferment. It was therefore resolved in a parliament of the people, held in the year 1323, to adopt a singular plan of election that both obviated the quick recurrence of this evil, and flattered the ambition of a democracy, at once intelligent and jealous and vain of their sovereignty. This was to admit all citizens of respectable character to the magistracy by rotation. By the scheme which was now digested five public bodies, the reigning signiory of priors, the gonfaloniers of militia, the captains of the Guelf society, the twelve buonomini, and the consuls 1328

CHAP. IV. PART III.

of arts, separately made out lists of all citizens above thirty years of age and of Guelf origin, whom they deemed deserving of public trust. And to prevent the omission of any respectable name by these electoral colleges of distinct interests, a sixth body of other deputies from the different quarters of the city also prepared a similar list. Then all the lists thus formed were united into one, and the six colleges, in number altogether ninety-seven persons, meeting proceeded to ballot upon every name. Sixty-eight suffrages were necessary to place an individual upon either of the reformed lists from whence the priors, the buonomini, the consuls of arts, and the gonfaloniers, were to be taken respectively at every renewal of the magistracies. As none of these could be held for more than two or four months, several hundred citizens were summoned in rotation within two years to take their share in the government. All the names on the reformed lists were written on separate tickets, placed in bags, and drawn out as they were wanted, by lot, to fill the vacant magistracies. But, at the end of every two years, fresh names were added by the same process as before to those which remained undrawn.—At the same time with these enactments, the four great legislative councils of the state were abolished and replaced by two new bodies; the first of three hundred members entirely plebeian, and termed consiglio di popolo: the second, or consiglio di commune,

composed of two hundred and fifty persons, of whom one half might be noble. Both these councils were changed every four months.

Sudden power acquired in Italy by John king of Bohemia.

The tranquillity which Florence and all Tuscany might have hoped to enjoy, after the death of Castruccio Castracani and the return of the emperor Louis into Germany, was almost immediately disturbed by the strange elevation of a new and unexpected sovereign. John king of Bohemia, son of the emperor Henry VII., a prince of singular character, had for several years borne a distinguished part in the affairs of Germany. By his chivalrous qualities, his noble figure and dignified eloquence, and by the disinterestedness with which he devoted himself to reconcile the German factions, he had acquired an extraordinary reputation for generosity and self-denial. The personal glory of becoming the pacificator of Europe appeared to be his sole ambition; and for this he abandoned the care of his own states to traverse the continent with the rapidity of a courier. He happened to be on the confines of Italy when the Brescians, moved by the report of his virtues, sent an embassy to offer him for life the signiory of their town. Gladly entering on a new field of employment, he accepted the offer; and numerous other Italian cities immediately imitated the example of Brescia.

It is a remarkable proof of the restlessness of the people, and of the general disgust with which the fleeting reigns of their own petty tyrants and the struggles of factions had inspired them, that in 1331

CHAP. IV. PART III.

a few months nearly the half of northern and central Italy had implored the eccentric monarch to become its master. In Lombardy, Bergamo, Cremona, Pavia, Vercelli, and Novara invited tranquillity under his government; and even Azzo Visconti, the puissant lord of Milan, was induced or compelled to offer him his signiory and to rule as his vicar. Thus, too, the rulers of Parma Modena and Reggio opened their gates to him; and the same spirit spreading into Tuscany, the new Ghibelin signor of Lucca, who was attacked by the Florentines, eagerly surrendered his authority to the pacific conqueror. John every where reconciled the opposite factions, and charmed Italy with the fame of his virtues. The Florentines alone were proof against the general enthusiasm; they saw only in John a foreign prince and a dangerous neighbour; the son of their old enemy Henry VII., and the ally of Louis of Bavaria; an object of suspicion and of dread.

League excited by Florence against him.

They immediately put in motion against him that active and extensive policy which distinguished them from the other Italian states; and their efforts were seconded by the alarm with which Azzo Visconti and Mastino della Scala awoke to a sense of their danger. While the king of Bohemia, leaving his son to maintain his new power with a body of gens-d'armerie, was raising fresh forces in France, Italy was surprised by a league

1332 between the old king of Naples and the Florentine republic, and their ancient enemies the Ghibelin princes. The partition of the dominions so

suddenly acquired by the stranger prince was the object of the confederates, and the restoration of the former equilibrium the pretext of the compact. Cremona was to fall to Azzo Visconti, Parma to the lord of Verona, Modena to the marquis of Este, Reggio to the signor of Mantua, and, finally, Lucca to the Florentines.

Success of the confederates. 1333

It was to no purpose that John of Bohemia shortly entered Italy attended by the flower of the French chivalry. After some uninteresting hostilities the confederates proved too strong for him; and, with a reverse of fortune as rapid as his success, he saw new enemies gathering daily around him, while the cities which had invited him to govern them either revolted, or submitted to his sovereignty with impatience and disaffection. Finding the aspect of Italian affairs no longer favorable to his influence, he at once resolved with characteristic levity to abandon the country altogether. But he first collected all the money of which he could drain the cities under his sway by contributions and by the sale of their signiories to the different chiefs of parties. Then sending his German cavalry under his son into Bohemia, and himself returning to figure in the tournaments of Paris, he finally quitted Italy, after having for three years exercised an influence over its politics to which the situation of his own dominions could in no respect contribute.

Abandonment of Italy by the king of Bohemia.

The departure of the king of Bohemia removed every obstacle to the success of the Ghibelin and Florentine confederates; the signors to whom he

CHAP. IV. PART III.

had sold his authority, finding resistance unavailing, successively surrendered their cities upon the best conditions which they could obtain; and thus all the acquisitions contemplated by the
1335 allies fell into their hands. The lord of Milan secured Cremona and other cities, the marquis of Este and the signor of Mantua acquired Modena and Reggio respectively, and Mastino della Scala established his power over Parma. Florence only, whose exertions had animated the confederates, whose contingents had been constantly furnished to their armies, and whose impartial intervention had alone restricted them from robbing each other of their spoils, Florence was herself defrauded of her share of the general conquests. The lord of Verona, having obtained possession of Lucca by negociation with its signor, refused to deliver up the city to the Florentines to whom it had been allotted by the treaty of partition; and the republicans discovered too late that they had wasted their resources merely to aggrandize a formidable neighbour.

Treachery and power of Mastino della Scala, lord of Verona.

Mastino della Scala, lord of Verona, had, jointly with a brother who was wholly absorbed in pleasures, succeeded his uncle the great Cane in 1329 in the possession of the whole Trevisan March. Inheriting the talents and ambition without the virtues of Cane, Mastino had already by the acquisition of Parma extended his states from the north-eastern frontiers of Italy to the confines of Tuscany; and the possession of the strong city of

Lucca now gave him a secure footing in this province. He shortly made it appear to what purpose he meant to apply this new advantage. Under the plea of re-establishing the Ghibelin interests but in reality to forward his own schemes of dominion, he began to fill all Tuscany with his machinations. Florence was neither slow to discover her danger nor to resent the treachery of her faithless ally. But after herself contributing, by the part which she had taken in the late war, to elevate the power of Mastino, she found it not easy to put a rein upon his pride and ambition. From Azzo Visconti and the Ghibelin signors of Lombardy, his natural allies, she could hope for no aid, and though the Guelf cities of Tuscany and the king of Naples were engaged to her by their old connection, neither these little republics, nor Robert whose activity was chilled by age, were likely to afford her a vigorous assistance. Alone, notwithstanding her population and wealth, she was scarcely able to cope with an enemy who, by his personal talents, his large possessions, and the splendid revenues * which they yielded to him, had become the first native prince of Italy. The commercial citizens of Florence, however, displaying a spirit equal to the emergency and cheer-

* The imposts of the cities under his sway yielded Mastino an annual profit of 700,000 florins about 350,000*l.* sterling,—a greater revenue than that of any contemporary monarch, and an immense sum for that age, when the value of money was at least seven times greater than at present. Villani, b. ix. p. 782.

CHAP. IV. PART III.

fully opening their coffers for the public service, shortly placed the treasury in a condition to meet every demand; and the interests of a state, hitherto almost as much a stranger to the politics as to the factions of Italy, were fortunately involved in similar hostility to the projects of the Veronese prince.

By restricting the Venetian citizens from the manufacture of salt on the Trevisan coast which bordered on their lagunes, and by subjecting their vessels to heavy duties in navigating the Po, Mastino della Scala had given serious offence to the queen of the Adriatic. The haughty and prudent republic could neither brook the novel pretensions nor be indifferent to the increasing power of her designing neighbour; and she listened with pleasure to the overtures by which Florence secretly tempted her to unite in humbling the object of their common jealousy. The Tuscan state liberally engaged to defray half the charges of an army which should be employed against Mastino della Scala in the Trevisan March, and to resign to Venice the sole possession of such conquests as might be made in that quarter; only reserving for herself the acquisition of Lucca which she was to obtain by attacking Mastino in Tuscany entirely with her own resources. Upon these terms an alliance was signed between the two republics, and the lord of Verona had soon abundant reason to repent of the pride and treachery by which he had provoked their formidable union. While a large army

League formed by Florence and Venice against him. 1336

which they jointly took into pay entered the Trevisan March under Piero de' Rossi, the most chivalrous and virtuous noble of the age; the skilful negociations of the Florentines seduced the lords of Milan and Mantua and the marquis of Este to forsake the alliance of Mastino and to unite in stripping him of his territories. Nor were the Florentines contented with drawing down the hostility of the Lombard powers upon their enemy; their indefatigable policy even extended to the frontiers of Germany, and engaged the duke of Carinthia to pour an army into his dominions.

His humiliation.

Mastino della Scala was utterly powerless against the host of enemies which the vengeance of Florence had excited against him. During three campaigns he was unable to oppose the league in the field, and was compelled to witness the successive loss of many of his principal cities. His brother Albert was surprized and made prisoner in Padua by the treachery of the family of Carrara who acquired the sovereignty of that city; Feltro was captured by the duke of Carinthia; Brescia revolted and fell with other places to Azzo Visconti; and though the republics sustained a heavy loss in the death of their celebrated captain Piero de' Rossi, who was killed at the siege of a petty castle, the fortunes of the Scala became so desperate that peace could alone save their house from total destruction. In this hopeless condition Mastino artfully addressed himself to the Venetians, and, by satisfying all their de-

1337

CHAP. IV. PART III. 1338

mands, detached them from the general interests of the coalition. By a separate treaty which their republic concluded with him, and which was then only communicated to the Florentines for their acceptance, Mastino ceded to Venice Treviso with other fortresses and possessions and the right of free navigation on the Po; he agreed at the same time to yield Bassano and an extension of territory to the new lord of Padua, and to confirm the sovereignty of Brescia to Azzo Visconti; but for the Florentine republic no farther advantage was stipulated than the enjoyment of a few castles which they had already conquered in Tuscany. Upon these conditions Albert della Scala was liberated from prison.

Thus Florence was a second time abandoned by a league which had been formed solely by her exertions, and whose successes had been purchased in a great measure at her charge. Too confident in the result of the war, and desirous of sparing a city and territory which she considered must eventually fall to her as the reward of her sacrifices to the common cause of her allies, she had abstained from any vigorous attack upon Lucca, and suffered the prize to slip from her grasp. Though in the first moment of indignation at this treachery the Florentines hesitated whether they should not still continue the war with Mastino unassisted, the heavy debt which they had contracted, and two appalling checks which their commerce sustained at this epoch, determined them in favor of more pacific coun-

sels. The wars of the times between England and France had involved Florence in both these misfortunes. From two of her commercial houses, the Bardi and Peruzzi, Edward III. had borrowed immense sums, which so much exceeded his means of repayment as to produce the failure of these bankers, and with it the ruin of many of their fellow-citizens. And while the necessities or bad faith of one monarch entailed this disaster on the republic, his rival Philip de Valois, with a more open violation of justice, replenished his exhausted funds by seizing the effects of all her merchants in his dominions under the pretext of their usurious transactions. Under the heavy pressure of the temporary distresses which these losses occasioned, Florence unwillingly acceded to the terms of the general pacification with the lord of Verona.

For about three years after the termination of the war against Mastino della Scala, Florence and all Tuscany were at peace; and even this short interval of repose was sufficient to recruit the strength of the republic and to revive her schemes of ambition. The vast commerce which her citizens maintained, notwithstanding the inland position of the city, with every foreign country of the civilized world poured astonishing riches into the state, and quickly repaired the waste of the greatest expenditure. From one extremity of Europe to the other, her bankers and merchants pursued their transactions in every city. In the magazines of Venice and Antwerp, in the markets

CHAP. IV. PART III.

Prosperity of Florence.

of London and Paris, in the vessels which traded on the Mediterranean and the ocean, in the convoys which traversed Italy, Germany, and France, Florentine manufactures and Florentine property were still to be found. Thus notwithstanding every misfortune and loss, perpetual and increasing wealth flowed into the coffers of her enterprising citizens and invigorated the resources of her free community. Not that tranquillity and public happiness reigned undisturbed in her streets. A frightful pestilence, which was in the middle of the century to ravage all Europe simultaneously or in quick succession, first broke out in the city during this short period of pacification, and carried off 15,000 persons; and its horrors had scarcely subsided when they were followed by the miseries of civil discord. Since the establishment of the ordinances of justice, the administration of affairs had principally rested in the hands of the higher classes of the plebeian citizens; and this wealthy oligarchy, which was little less the object of dislike to the lower people than to the old nobility, maintained its power with difficulty against the popular disaffection, and the conspiracies of nobles who were debarred of all share in the government and perpetually galled by the arrogance of their successful rivals. Yet such was the vitality of public energy which was inspired by a prosperous commerce and a free constitution, that in the midst of internal dissensions the republic was in a condition, three years after the peace with the lord of Verona, to under-

take the purchase of the city of which she had twice failed to obtain the acquisition by her warlike confederacies. CHAP. IV. PART III.

In the decline of his power Mastino della Scala had still retained the sovereignty of Parma until it was wrested from him, through the usual process of a conspiracy, by one of his own relatives who rode 1341
the city and established himself as its signor, This loss interrupted the communication between his original dominions and Tuscany; and determined him to sell the sovereignty of Lucca either to the Florentines or the Pisans. The former people first closed with his offer, and agreed to pay 250,000 florins for an assumed right, of which the purchase and the sale were equally iniquitous. The Pisans, who had recovered something of their ancient vigour, could not regard the prospect of further aggrandizement to a state, whose preponderance already threatened their safety, without the greatest uneasiness and jealousy. They no sooner learnt the conclusion of the bargain than they assembled all their militia, and marched to the siege of Lucca. Their old influence with the Ghibelin party seemed at once to revive. The chieftains and cities of that faction in Tuscany and Romagna leagued with them; the Ghibelin princes of Lombardy, including the signor of Milan, sent them assistance; and Florence, at first unprepared for this new war, was compelled to assemble an army to secure her purchase. But though she was now aided by Mastino, who put her in possession of Lucca and supplied some

War with Pisa.

CHAP. IV. PART III.

auxiliaries, she not only failed, through the incapacity of her generals, to oblige the Ghibelins to raise the siege of that city, but sustained a total defeat under its walls; which the operations of the next campaign did not retrieve.

Discontent at Florence. Arrival of the duke of Athens in the city.

1342

Florence was now on the eve of more intolerable misfortune and disgrace than the unsuccessful or unskilful conduct of a foreign war. While the public discontent, which had been excited by the failures of two campaigns before Lucca, was at its height, Walter de Brienne, titular duke of Athens,* who had served the state under the signiory of Charles of Calabria as lieutenant of that prince, arrived at Florence on his road to Naples; and the favor which he was known to enjoy with king Robert immediately determined the rulers of the republic to invest him with some command in their army, in the hope of inducing that monarch to fulfil his standing engagements of succour. The duke joining their forces distinguished himself in some skir-

* Walter de Brienne was no more than an adventurer at the courts of France and Naples. His grandfather, by marriage with the descendant of one of the French barons who had dismembered the eastern empire in the fourth crusade, became possessed of the Latin duchy of Athens; and his father, the fruit of this marriage, lost his life in 1312 in battle against the Great Company of the Catalans—the earliest of the condottieri—who, on the pacification of Sicily in 1302, passed from the standard of king Frederic into the east. After first serving the emperor Andronicus the Elder and then ravaging his dominions, the Great Company finally, on the death of the duke of Athens, established themselves in his principality and drove his son into exile. Ducange, Histoire de Constantinople, b. vi. cc. 7 and 8. pp. 117, 118.

mishes, but the Florentine general, instead of supporting him and improving an occasion of destroying the Ghibelin army, unaccountably retreated before it, and the garrison of Lucca, thus abandoned to its fate, and having exhausted its provisions, capitulated after a siege of twelve months, and delivered the city to the Pisans.

His elevation to power.

Amidst the violent indignation which broke out at Florence on the inglorious return of the army, the voice of the people was loud in contrasting the courage and activity of the duke of Athens, with the incapacity or cowardice of their own general. The discontent of the citizens became so alarming that the reigning oligarchy, to satisfy them and promote their own views, were glad to invest the duke both with the civil authority of captain of justice and the supreme military command. He was already the object of regard to two parties in the state, alike dangerous for the public liberty. These were the ancient nobility, and the new aristocracy of wealthy citizens—the popolani grandi. The former, excluded from political rights and possessing no interests in common with those of freedom, were willing to purchase a share of power at any price: the latter, obnoxious both to the nobles and people, were eager to preserve at all hazards the oligarchical influence which they had contrived to exercise over the biennial elections of priors, and with it the exclusive direction of the state. Perpetually reproached with domestic misgovernment and foreign disasters, and generally suspected of pecu-

lation, this party, to put a stronger curb upon the spirit of the nobility whom they principally feared, had several times within the last six years procured the nomination of a foreign magistrate of almost unlimited criminal jurisdiction; and had each time converted the temporary authority of this judge into an engine of grievous oppression for their enemies. They now intrigued to make a similar use of the duke of Athens, while on the other hand the nobles projected their own restoration to power by devoting themselves to the service of the same prince. The ruling oligarchy secretly excited the new captain of justice to a rigorous severity of administration, which they designed to turn against the nobles. But though the duke in the outset dissembled and appeared to fall into their measures, he shortly convinced them that he had no intention to play any secondary part. The first capital sentences which he pronounced were directed against four leading persons of their own oligarchy. The punishment of two of them, whom he condemned to death for peculation, was commuted for ruinous fines; but the two others, charged with military offences, were beheaded. One of these great commoners was Giovanni de' Medici—an ancestor of that celebrated family who were destined in the sequel to hold so brilliant and, for the cause of liberty, so fatal a career in the annals of Florence. His surrender of Lucca of which he had been governor was made the pretext—as far as it would appear, an unjust one—for his execution.

These sentences, whether iniquitous or otherwise, gratified the jealous hatred of the nobles against the wealthy commoners, and were even more agreeable to the lower people, who are always pleased with the humiliation of their superiors. While the oligarchy by this severity were filled with terror at the power which they had themselves elevated, the duke sedulously cultivated the favor of the nobles by promising to restore them to power, and won the affection of the populace by base familiarity and adulation. These opposite classes, thus seduced by his arts, and uniting in the common desire of satiating their detestation of the reigning party, blindly seconded the bad ambition of a foreign adventurer. In a general parliament of the sovereign people, it was resolved by the clamorous voice of the multitude to bestow on the duke of Athens the signiory of Florence for life; and though the more virtuous citizens, as well as the oligarchy, regarded the measure with horror, the idol of the hour was installed by the armed nobles and the riotous populace in the palace of the priors. The standard of the republic was dragged through the mud, and publicly burnt with the book of the ordinances of justice; the arms of the state were thrown down from the public buildings to be replaced by those of the new signor; and Walter de Brienne remained lord of Florence.

Subversion of the republic.

Until this disgraceful epoch, Florence had never, amidst all the virulence of faction and under every vicissitude of fortune, renounced her

Florence under the tyranny of the duke of Athens.

CHAP. IV. PART III.

republican freedom. Even when circumstances had induced her to consult her safety under the occasional dictatorship of the princes of Anjou, she had tempered the evil, great as it was, with studied precaution. The maintenance of her permanent institutions had always been guarded by the solemn imposition of oaths and with the watchfulness of a wholesome jealousy. But she had now fallen from her pride of place; and, there might appear every reason to expect that the next generation would see her sons numbered with the degenerate slaves of the tyrants of Italy. Fortunately, however, for her happiness and fame, the duke of Athens was utterly deficient in that treacherous moderation by which the first signors of Lombardy had riveted the chains of their victims. He at once took into his pay all the French adventurers whom he could assemble from other parts of Italy, and having thus organized a formidable body of cavalry, he immediately began to treat the Florentines like a conquered people. To avoid the chance of encountering any reverse which might weaken his power over the city, he concluded a dishonorable peace with the Pisans to whom he abandoned the possession of Lucca, while all the cities which had been more or less subject to Florence seized the moment of her disgrace to cast off the yoke. Within her walls the shame of this loss of national honor, and the undisguised tyranny of the duke, rouzed all classes of the citizens from their short lived infatuation. The nobles, instead of being raised to power,

found themselves the sport of the caprice and contempt of an insolent master who filled the offices of magistracy from the dregs of the populace; the wealthy plebeians were oppressed with onerous taxes; and even the lower artizans, an order whom the duke desired to court, were disgusted by the abrogation of their corporate laws. Meantime the horrible and incessant executions and tortures by which the tyrant sought to strike affright into the people, excited their horror and commiseration for the sufferers; and an accidental dearth of provisions completed the general discontent and misery. The usurpation of the duke of Athens had endured little more than ten months when it became altogether intolerable. Numerous conspiracies, each totally unconnected with the others, and the three greatest of which comprehended almost all the old nobility and popolani grandi, were separately organized for the restoration of liberty. The imprudence of a soldier who had been gained over to the public cause awakened the suspicion of the duke, aware as he was of the general hatred against him. Several individuals were in consequence arrested and put to the torture; and all the members of the different conspiracies, fearing their own secret discovered, immediately armed. At this juncture some obscure plebeians raised the cry of revolution in the streets;—and in an instant all Florence arose. Such of the duke's soldiery as were detached throughout the city were at once overpowered and slaughtered; the

Numerous conspiracies against him.

CHAP. IV. PART III.

streets were quickly barricaded to prevent the main body of the foreign gens-d'armerie from riding the city; and these troops were first hemmed in within the square before the palace of the tyrant, and then compelled to abandon their horses and seek shelter in the palace itself from the showers of missiles which were directed against them from the housetops. The fallen tyrant was thus reduced to extremities; and though by the intervention of the bishop of Florence—himself a conspirator in the glorious cause—his own life was spared, he was compelled solemnly to abdicate the signiory, to depart for ever from the city, * and to surrender the guilty ministers of his cruelties to be torn in pieces by the infuriated and merciless populace.

Fall of the tyrant. 1343

Restoration of freedom.

The first care of the Florentines on the restoration of freedom was to re-establish their republican institutions. But the important services which the nobility had performed in the general deliverance, demanded the public gratitude, and they were at first cheerfully admitted, in equal numbers with the commoners, into the signiory of priors. This harmony was unhappily but of short duration. The nobles were scarcely relieved from the long restraint which had been imposed upon them by the ordinances of justice, when they began to insult and oppress the lower citi-

* The perfidious tyrant of Florence after his expulsion underwent a series of adventures, was created constable of France, and found a death more honorable than his life on the field of Poitiers.

zens, and even to fill the city with their assassinations and outrages. But the people knew their power; the general indignation against the nobility was rouzed into action by the Medici and other wealthy commoners; and after a short but furious struggle in the streets, the ancient aristocracy were entirely defeated, their fortified palaces forced and burnt, and their most obnoxious members driven from the city, only two months after the expulsion of the duke of Athens. The ordinances of justice were then restored in full vigour; but in absolutely excluding the general body of nobles from political rights, the republic made an equitable distinction in behalf of individuals who had not disturbed the public peace. Five hundred and thirty nobles were erased by an act of favor from the list of the proscribed aristocracy, and raised to the privileges of commoners:—a singular elevation, for such it was, since, without the power of really affecting nobility of descent, it superadded qualification for all the offices of state to hereditary honor.

After this new triumph of the people, the constitution underwent some trifling modifications. The priors were increased from six to eight, and chosen, two each, from the four quarters into which the city was divided; and instead of being selected from the greater arts only, the signiory, composed of these eight magistrates with the gonfaloniers of justice, were to be taken equally from the three orders of the great commoners, the second class of citizens, and the artisans. The

CHAP. IV. PART III.

gonfaloniers of companies (now reduced to sixteen) and twelve buonomini were to form, with the signiory, a deliberative body for the discussion of every proposition before it should be presented for the legislative enactment of the great councils. But the gonfaloniers of companies and the buonomini were only the advisers of the signiory, since every measure necessarily originated with the latter body. Under this modified constitution Florence at length enjoyed internal repose for many years.*

Affairs of Naples

While tranquillity was beaming anew upon Florence, the prospect in southern Italy was overclouded by the death of king Robert of Naples. Though the designing interference of this monarch in the factions of the times, and his ambitious schemes of universal supremacy over the peninsula, have frequently introduced his name into the preceding pages, I have hitherto scarcely had occasion to notice the condition of his own kingdom. During the wars which he instigated in other quarters in the earlier part of his long reign to forward his greediness of dominion, Naples was seldom the theatre of action; and the coasts and frontiers of that kingdom were undisturbed to the close of his life, except by the occasional revival of the ancient contest of his house

* Muratori, Annali, A. D. 1328—1343. Giov. Villani. bb. 10. (cap. 147. ad fin.) 11. and 12. (cap. 1—22.) Sismondi, vol. v. pp. 191—368. These, with occasional references to the third book of Pignotti, are the sources from whence I have drawn the materials for the last twenty-four pages.

with Frederic, king of Sicily. The periods of Robert's absence from his kingdom, and his hostilities with the emperor Henry VII., and with his successor Louis of Bavaria, were eagerly and unscrupulously seized by the Sicilian prince to invade the Neapolitan dominions; and Robert as often employed the first moment of relief from the pressure of other enemies to carry his arms into Sicily: but I shall not detain the reader with the story of these desultory and uninteresting wars, for their course was sullied by sanguinary and atrocious circumstances, and they produced not the only legitimate object of contest, a firm and enduring peace. But Frederic chose the moment of some of the distractions in which the politics of Italy involved his rival, to proclaim his son Peter heir to his crown, contrary to the conditions of his treaty of 1303 with Charles II. of Naples; and he induced the barons, the clergy, and the cities of Sicily, to swear allegiance to their future monarch. Accordingly on the death of Frederic at an advanced age, and after a warlike reign of above forty years, the memory of his 1337
virtues and talents secured the affection of his subjects towards his son, and established Peter II. on the throne. This prince, unlike his father in all kingly qualities, wore the crown of Sicily only five years, and it devolved on his decease to his infant son Louis. Both on the death of Frederic and of Peter, the king of Naples renewed his enterprises against Sicily; but neither the factious divisions of the Sicilian nobility, nor the feeble

CHAP. IV. PART III.

character of Peter and the weakness of a subsequent minority, enabled Robert to triumph over the independent spirit of the islanders; and, oppressed by years and domestic cares, he at length renounced his projects, and left the descendants of Frederic in unopposed possession of Sicily.

Last years of Robert, king of Naples.

The last years of Robert formed a gloomy reverse to the fortune and vigour of his earlier reign. In the inactivity of old age he lost all his influence in the general politics of Italy, and the administration of his own dominions fell into confusion and disorder. The death of his only son, while exercising the signiory of Florence, in 1328, deprived his throne of its natural support; and, as the duke of Calabria left only two infant daughters, the old monarch might justly tremble for the future security of these helpless children. He laboured to avert the fatal consequences of a disputed succession by inducing his nephew Carobert, king of Hungary, whose rights he had originally usurped, to betroth his second son Andrew at the age of only seven years to Joanna the eldest of his infant grand-children; and the young prince was removed to the court of Naples to receive his education as its future sovereign.

This union which, to the erring eye of human foresight, might seem to have been planned with singular wisdom, was destined to scatter the seeds of civil war and calamity for above a century and a half. As Andrew advanced towards manhood, he displayed a sullen and vicious temper; his habits were low and brutal, his capacity

weak, and his manners barbarous. Acquiring none of the elegance of the court in which he had been educated—then the most brilliant, although the most corrupt, in Europe—he associated only with rude Hungarians whose gross propensities accorded with his taste. The old king reading his character apprehended the consequences of entrusting the rights of his grand-daughter to his generosity; and one of his last acts was to assemble the states of the kingdom, and to impose on them an oath of allegiance to their future queen Joanna. At the same time, changing his original purpose, and excluding Andrew from a joint succession to his throne, he limited the future sovereignty of his kingdom to Joanna alone. Finally, by his last testament at the approach of dissolution, he bequeathed his dominions to that princess with remainder to her younger sister, established a regency, declared that her administration should not commence until the completion of her twenty-fifth year, and restricted Andrew to a matrimonial crown and the reversion of the principality of Salerno if his consort should die without issue. * After these

* Sismondi, following the text of Matteo Villani, speaks of the will of Robert (vol. v. p. 380.) as though that monarch had imposed by its conditions no other restriction upon the sovereign authority of Andrew, than to direct that it should not commence until the completion of his *twenty-second* year. Sismondi probably had never seen the original document itself—(Test. del Re Roberto, e Codice Ital. Diplom. p. 1102.) which has since been printed in the appendix to the "Memoires, &c. sur Naples" of M. Orloff. By this instrument Robert expressly bequeathed the exclusive sovereignty to

CHAP. IV. PART III.

His death. 1343

precautions Robert prepared for his end, and terminated a reign of thirty-three years at the age of eighty. This sovereign, the friend and patron of Petrarch and Boccaccio and the protector of letters, was extravagantly eulogized by the learned of his times as a prodigy of wisdom and virtue; and the severity of later criticism, subjecting his memory to the usual fate of an over-rated reputation, has, on the contrary, dwelt only on his pedantry, his avarice, and the errors which marked the internal administration of his kingdom. Yet an impartial estimate of his character will raise it far above mediocrity. He was certainly learned himself in no ordinary degree for that age, and an encourager of learning in others; a skilful and active politician; and, judging him by the fair standard of contemporary sovereigns, not a bad king. Many of his laws, at least, breathe the spirit of wisdom and justice, and the measures by which he strove to regulate the succession to his throne, however unhappy in their results, were evidences of no common ability and prudence.

Joanna, queen of Naples.

Joanna was but sixteen years of age when she succeeded to the throne of her grandfather, and her husband Andrew was only two years her senior. Young, beautiful, and inexperienced, the

Joanna: "instituit sibi hæredem universalem Joannam," &c.; and nothing can be clearer than his intention to limit Andrew to the enjoyment of a mere matrimonial crown. The regency, too, was to last until both Joanna and Andrew should have completed their *twenty-fifth* year.

mistress of a brilliant court, the splendour of which was enhanced by the presence of numerous princes of the blood (sons of Robert's brothers), Joanna found but too many temptations to plunge into a career of thoughtless and dissipated, perhaps of criminal gaiety. The aversion that she had acquired for her husband was increased by the jealousy of power which he evinced; and sedulously fomented by her advisers and confidants, who desired to exclude Andrew from the direction of affairs that, by immersing the queen in pleasures, they might themselves govern in her name. Andrew on the contrary, was surrounded and ruled by Hungarians, and particularly by an artful and ambitious friar his preceptor, who openly aspired to govern the kingdom in his name. By such men he was taught, for their own selfish ends, to despise a matrimonial crown and a shadow of authority, while his own descent from the elder brother of king Robert gave him a better hereditary claim to the throne than his wife could derive from that monarch. He was therefore encouraged to solicit the papal court of Avignon to sanction his pretensions by authorizing his immediate coronation. In this design he had every prospect of success, and, daily expecting a papal bull to legalize the ceremony, he already began to discover his resentment against his enemies by threats of vengeance, and to betray his doubts of the fidelity of his youthful queen; who was, indeed, generally suspected of an intrigue with her cousin, prince Louis of Tarento. The

CHAP. IV. PART III.

projects and menaces of Andrew were communicated to Joanna by her courtiers; and among these the principal favorite was a female of low birth, Philippa the Catanian, who had been elevated by the royal family of Naples to wealth and distinction, and was the confidante of the queen's most intimate secrets. By this woman, her family, and associates, a conspiracy was immediately formed against Andrew, of which it appears to me difficult to believe her ignorant.

Under the pretext of a hunting party, the court was carried to the neighbourhood of Aversa, and, after the amusement, the king and queen, with a train principally composed of the conspirators, repaired for the night to the solitary convent of San Pietro, not far from that town. After supping gaily together the royal pair withdrew to the chamber prepared for them; but, just as Andrew was retiring to rest with the queen, one of the conspirators came to the door of the chamber, and stated that a messenger had arrived from Naples with dispatches of the utmost importance. The victim rose unsuspiciously at the summons; but he had no sooner passed the door of his apartment than it was closed against him by the female attendants of the queen, and he was seized by the conspirators who were waiting for him in the corridor. He was overpowered after a desperate resistance, in which he drew blood from several of the assassins. Stopping his mouth with their gloves, they dragged him towards an adjoining window, and, believing that

Murder of her husband Andrew.

1345

a ring which his mother had given to him was a talisman against death by the sword or poison, they fastened a silken cord about his neck, and pushed him out of the window which was near the ground. Some of their associates, who were in readiness in the gardens below, then pulled him down by the legs as he hung, and completed the work of strangulation. It was probably the intention of the murderers to have buried the body in the convent garden, but Isolda, a faithful Hungarian woman, who had nursed the infancy of Andrew and watched over his manhood with undiminished solicitude, was rouzed by his cries, and rushing into his apartment, found the queen there alone, seated by the nuptial couch with her face buried in her hands. The reply of Joanna to her agonized enquiry after her master increased the alarm of this woman; she ran with a flambeau to a window, and from thence saw by its light the corpse of the unhappy prince extended on the grass, with the fatal cord still round his neck. Concealment was no longer possible, the assassins fled at the appearance of Isolda, and her shrieks immediately spread the alarm through the convent, and from thence to the neighbouring town.

Amidst the general indignation and horror which this foul tragedy excited, Joanna returned to Naples with the body of her murdered husband which was there privately interred, and fear and gloomy suspicion pervaded the voluptuous court which, but a few days before, had echoed only to the voice of pleasure. The Neapolitan princes,

CHAP. IV. PART III.

whose hands were not dyed in the conspiracy, fortified their palaces as though their own lives were endangered; and Charles duke of Durazzo, another of them who had married the queen's sister and who did not escape suspicion of having been concerned in the conspiracy, instigated the populace to avenge the murder of the king, probably with the hope of ascending the throne by the deposition of Joanna. The queen on her part, with Louis of Tarento, now her avowed lover, also assembled her partizans, and every thing threatened a furious civil war. But the intelligence of the fate of Andrew had in the mean time reached the court of Avignon, and Clement VI., the reigning pontiff, considering himself called upon as feudal superior of the Neapolitan crown to punish the authors of the
1346 atrocity, directed a commission to Bertrand del Bazzo, grand justiciary of the kingdom of Naples, to institute a process for the discovery of the murderers, without respect of persons or regard to human dignities. Joanna was powerless against this mandate: the seneschal of the royal household, having been first arrested on suspicion and put to the torture, disclosed his accomplices, and the justiciary, attended by the populace of the capital bearing a standard on which the murder of Andrew was depicted, presented himself before the queen's fortified palace to demand the persons of the conspirators. After an ineffectual attempt to resist, Joanna was compelled to deliver up the accused, who were her most devoted servants,

and, among them Philippa, her special and infamous confidante; and these miserable wretches, of whose guilt there appeared no doubt, after being made to suffer the most frightful tortures, were burnt alive. But it was remarked that, contrary to usage in these execrable proceedings by torture, the public were entirely excluded from hearing the confessions of the criminals.

But this secrecy could neither remove the conviction which the world entertained of the guilt of Joanna, nor shield her from the indignation of an avenger. It was in vain that she wrote to Louis king of Hungary, the elder brother of Andrew,—who had succeeded his father Carobert on the throne of that kingdom some years before —to exculpate herself from the crime with which she was publicly charged. Louis only replied by sternly pronouncing his reasons for believing her guilty;* and immediately prepared both to revenge the cruel fate of his brother, and to assert his own hereditary claim to the throne, which he declared that Joanna had forfeited by her crimes. But Louis was unavoidably detained in his own kingdom for above a year before he could undertake an expedition into Italy, which would really appear to have been conceived less in the spirit of ambition than of just and natural indignation

Louis, king of Hungary, the avenger of his brother Andrew.

* The king of Hungary's letter was appallingly laconic. "Johanna! inordinata vita præterita, ambitiosa continuatio potestatis regiæ, neglecta vindicta, et excusatio subsequuta, te viri tui necis arguunt conscium et fuisse participem." A powerful summary of the presumptions against her innocence.—Bonfinius de Rebus. Hungar. Dec. II. b. x. p. 261.

CHAP. IV. PART III.

at the murder of his brother; and in the mean time Joanna strengthened the evidence against her innocence by an indecent marriage with her lover Louis of Tarento, who was believed to have been engaged in the plot against Andrew, and whose mother had afforded an asylum to some of the conspirators who fled before they were accused. At length the king of Hungary passed into northern Italy with a small force and a well-filled treasury; levied an army of condottieri; and entered the kingdom of Naples, where he was universally welcomed by the nobility and people. The queen and her new husband fled to Provence; but Charles of Durazzo and the other princes her cousins, repairing to the camp of the Hungarian monarch, acknowledged him for their sovereign, and the whole kingdom gladly submitted to his authority.

His conquest of Naples. 1347

Passing through Aversa on his march, Louis desired to visit the convent which had been the scene of his brother's murder, and, attended by the Neapolitan princes, proceeded to the fatal balcony from whence Andrew had been thrown. The sight of this place might awaken emotions of grief and fury; and Louis suddenly turning to Charles of Durazzo in a transport of passion, denounced him as a wicked traitor whose insidious intrigues had occasioned the death of Andrew. "Thou shalt die," exclaimed he, "here, even on the spot where he perished." The ferocious Hungarians immediately fell upon Durazzo, dragged him by the hair to the window, and

threw him from it to dispatch him on the ground on which the corpse of Andrew had been discovered.—It is difficult to understand whether Durazzo was really implicated in the murder of Andrew, nor does it appear that any evidence was ever adduced of his immediate guilt. His activity in urging the punishment of the conspirators might even furnish an argument for his innocence, if his own station, both as the nearest male heir to the crown (except the king of Hungary), and as the husband of the queen's sister and destined successor, did not explain his eagerness to procure the exposure and deposition of Joanna. And, in the perplexity in which the mysterious story of Andrew's murder is throughout enveloped, the just and honorable character of Louis will scarcely warrant any other presumption, than that a discovery of the guilty intrigues of Durazzo had wrought him to the infliction of this summary vengeance, rash, and violent, and altogether unjustifiable as it was.

Subsequent war, 1348

Louis did not long preserve his new kingdom. Leaving garrisons in its strong places, he returned to Hungary, and the government of his generals became almost immediately disagreeable to the fickle Neapolitans. Pope Clement VI., too, could not without dissatisfaction see the kingdom of Naples transferred to a powerful sovereign who was not very likely to prove an obedient vassal to the Holy See. Receiving the queen in a solemn audience, in which she pleaded her cause in person, he declared his conviction of her innocence;

CHAP. IV. PART III.

and Joanna and her husband, encouraged by the disaffection of the Neapolitans against their foreign governors, and fortified by papal countenance, returned from Provence,* and taking a body of condottieri into pay, wrested great part of the kingdom from the Hungarians. After three years of indecisive warfare in which the mercenary troops on both sides committed shocking atrocities, Louis, who had made a second expedition into southern Italy, became weary of hostilities to which there appeared no end; and he listened at last to terms of accommodation. Joanna engaged again to submit the investigation of her guilt or innocence to the pope, and to resign her crown to the king of Hungary, if his Holiness should pronounce sentence against her; but, if the issue of the enquiry should be favorable to her, Louis agreed to withdraw his troops. A solemn process was accordingly instituted at the court of Avignon, of which it was easy to foretell the result. Yet so evident appeared the guilt of the queen, that her ambassadors could adopt no better defence than by the deposition of witnesses that sorcery had been practised upon her, and the conclusion that, if her participation in the conspiracy were proved, she must still stand absolved as having yielded only to the resistless powers of hell. Upon this strange and ridiculous plea, the

and pacification between Joanna and Louis.

* It was just before the return of Joanna to Naples at this epoch, that Clement VI. purchased of her, as countess of Provence, the sovereignty of the city of Avignon for 30,000 florins: a very seasonable supply of money for her necessities.

pope and his cardinals, who were eager to find a pretext for her acquittal, abolished the accusation and pronounced her cleared of offence. The king of Hungary submitted with good faith to the decision, and even refused by his ambassadors to receive an immense sum, which the pope awarded to him as a remuneration for the charges of the war: declaring that he had not undertaken it to amass money, but to revenge the murder of his brother. *

Re-establishment of Joanna in her kingdom. 1351

Although the popes continued, from their distant and luxurious retreat of Avignon, to assert

State of Rome during the ab-

* Giovanni Villani, parts of bb. ix. xi. xii. Matteo Villani, also, parts of bb. i. and i. ad cap. 66. Dominici de Gravin., Chron. de Rebus in Apuliâ Gestis. (Scrip. Ital. vol. 12.) Giannone, bb. xxii. xxiii. Sismondi, vol. v. pp. 377—387. vi. pp. 29—39, &c. The chronicle of Gravina affords by far the best and most satisfactory account of Neapolitan history at this period, and particularly of the circumstances of Andrew's murder. I am surprised that any doubt can be entertained of Joanna's guilt, after perusal of this unvarnished relation by a contemporary of no suspicious authority. There never was circumstantial evidence of a more definite character.

I need not call the attention of the reader to the similarity of the stories of Joanna and Mary queen of Scots, which every one has observed. But the coincidence is certainly very curious. The resemblance in character and temper between Andrew and Darnley, the mystery in which the murder of both was involved; the youth, the beauty, the subsequent misfortunes of the two queens; the contempt and detestation of their husbands which appear to have been common to both; their indecent marriages with men who were suspected as accomplices in the death of their lords:—all these, and a thousand minor circumstances, even to the standards on which the murders were depicted to animate the populace of Naples and Edinburgh to vengeance, will naturally occur to the mind in comparing the two historical problems.

CHAP. IV. PART III.

sence of the popes at Avignon.

and exercise a paramount authority over the affairs of Naples, a foreign residence considerably weakened their influence over the rest of Italy. There had been, perhaps, in the general tenor of their policy, little reasonable cause for the discontent and regret which we find that their absence occasioned among the Italians. They had much more frequently proved themselves the disturbers than the protectors of public happiness in the peninsula; and it is not easy to discover how the removal of the pontificate could be injuriously felt in any city or state, except Rome. But the ancient seat of the papal court had certainly sufficient occasion to deplore the change. Besides the splendour and wealth which remained to that fallen capital from the presence of the ecclesiastical chiefs of Europe, some degree of order was usually preserved, so long as a sovereign pontiff dwelt within the walls; and though the crimes and violence of the nobles and the excesses of a vicious population could not always be restrained, and were even often excited by the conduct of the popes, all regard for the office and authority of the successors of St. Peter was seldom entirely abandoned.

The measure of respect and obedience which the popes exacted in Rome might naturally be regulated by their personal characters. Some even successfully claimed the right to appoint the senator—the temporal ruler of the city—or at least to require a general oath of supremacy from that magistrate; and, when the weakness of the

Private wars and crimes of the nobles.

reigning pontiff prevented his effectual interference in the maintenance of tranquillity, the arm of civil justice was never wholly and altogether powerless. But the Holy See was no sooner transferred to Avignon, than Rome fell into a frightful and universal anarchy. The nobles, among whom the great rival families of the Colonna and Orsini were most conspicuous, carried on their atrocious feuds with impunity and in daring insult to all municipal authority. Too barbarous to appreciate the majestic relics of ancient power and beauty, the sole glory of their city, too insensible to have respected if they had known their value, they were invited by the massive grandeur of the old monuments * to profane them with rapine and bloodshed. Converting many of

* "Whatever were the means by which they obtained possession," says Mr. Hobhouse speaking of a much earlier period than that before us, "the Orsini had occupied the Mole of Hadrian, and the Theatre of Pompey; the Colonna the Mausoleum of Augustus, and the Baths of Constantine. The Conti were in the Quirinal. The Frangipani had the Coliseum and the Septizonium of Severus, and the Janus of the Forum Boarium, and a corner of the Palatine. The Savelli were at the tomb of Metella. The Corsi had fortified the Capitol. If the churches were not spared, it is certain the pagan monuments would be protected by no imagined sanctity, and we find that the Corsi family had occupied the Basilica of St. Paul, without the walls, and that the Pantheon was a fortress defended for the Pope." (Historical Illustrations of the 4th Canto of Childe Harold, p. 123.) The lawless spirit of the Roman nobles, and the furious private wars and sieges which, during the middle ages, they continually waged with each other among the old monuments, scarcely inflicted less ruinous injury upon the remains of the ancient city, than was caused by the hostile assaults and ca-

these venerable edifices into fortresses; it was from the impregnable shelter which they afforded, that the nobles sallied with their retainers, to prosecute their sanguinary quarrels, or to violate the city with public robberies and offences of the darkest iniquity. Unable from their poverty to maintain bands of regular soldiery, they gave a refuge in these strongholds to banditti and men of desperate lives, who repaid the protection which enabled them to set all laws at defiance, by garrisoning the fortresses and executing the criminal projects of their patrons. It was in vain that the shadow of republican institutions was still preserved amidst the oppression, and spoliations, and murders, in which the nobles audaciously revelled. The civic council was impotent; the supreme senator was usually himself a noble, who protected only his own followers and punished only his personal enemies. Thus, just before the period at which this chapter is to terminate, the insolent excesses of the nobles had reduced the citizens of Rome to the lowest depths of abasement and misery: when the enthusiasm of one man, unassisted by the influence of high station and powerful adherents, imagined it possible not only to establish peaceful government in Rome,

lamities which attended the destruction of the western empire.

The whole of Mr. Hobhouse's note, on the general progress of that decay which has spared so little of the ancient capital of the universe, may be studied with profit, for the learning and research which it exhibits: —even after the splendid erudition of Gibbon's last chapter.

but to recover for the eternal city her ancient dominion over the earth. The first part of his design failed solely by his own want of judgment: without this capital defect in his character, the second could never have been conceived.

Cola di Rienzi

Cola di Rienzi, the son of an innkeeper and washerwoman * of Rome, had by the care of his parents received an education far above his station. The study of the best classical writers had early inflamed his mind with romantic admiration for antiquity, and inspired him with sorrow and shame at the modern degradation of his country. Gifted by nature with astonishing powers of eloquence, and animated by a generous desire to rekindle in the breasts of his fellow citizens the spirit of their republican ancestors, his learning could not teach him, and his inexperience of mankind prevented him from discovering, that the time for restoring the pristine majesty of Rome was for ever fled. By some accident, or by the reputation which his genius and eloquence had already procured for him, he was appointed a member of a deputation which the nobles, the clergy, and the citizens of Rome dispatched to Avignon in 1342 to supplicate the new pope

* The genealogy of many of the popes of Rome was equally illustrious. Pope Sixtus the fifth could number a washerwoman among his relations, or to speak in the language of the Roman heralds, he was privileged to carry her image in his processions. Rome of the middle ages presented therefore a finer theatre for virtuous ambition than the ancient city, where patrician power stalked in sullen majesty through the state.

CHAP. IV. PART III.

Clement VI. to re-establish the Holy See in its original seat. The mission failed of success, but the talents of Rienzi, who took the lead in opening its purpose, attracted the notice of Clement, and procured his appointment to the lucrative office of notary of the apostolical chamber. For several years after his return to Rome, Rienzi was distinguished by the unusual integrity with which he performed the duties of this situation; and he was unceasingly occupied at the same time in rouzing the spirit of the citizens to attempt their deliverance from the insolent tyranny of the nobles, and the general calamities which oppressed them. By allegorical pictures of the shipwrecked state, by ironical devices of their own shame, by the explanation of the monuments of extinguished grandeur, he laboured to arrest the attention of the ignorant multitude; by harangues, by satire, by resistless exhortations, he animated their passions and excited their hopes. The nobles regarded his efforts with stupid indifference or contempt; until at last, in the temporary absence of the chief of the Colonna, Rienzi induced the most respectable and higher classes of the citizens to enter into a conspiracy for the restoration of what he emphatically termed, the good estate. After a night passed in prayer, he issued at their head from one of the churches, armed, and with allegorical standards of liberty, justice, and peace; repaired in procession to the capitol while assembling multitudes gradually swelled his train; and proclaimed the establishment of the good estate,

excites the citizens to a successful insurrection.

1347

amidst the glad acclamations of an immense concourse of citizens.

This extraordinary revolution was at first completely successful; the astonished nobles, utterly unprepared for such an explosion of the popular strength, were compelled to submit to its violence; and the presence of the papal legate, who had been artfully associated in the ceremony, lent the apparent sanction of the pope to the insurrection. Rienzi was placed at the head of the good estate with the modest title of tribune, but with unlimited powers; and a militia of horse and foot was organized in the different quarters of Rome to support his authority. The first effects of these measures seemed to realize all the prophecies which Rienzi had attached to the establishment of the good estate. Tranquillity reigned in the city; some severe and just though arbitrary examples of punishment awed the boldest and most exalted offenders; the neighbouring country was subjected to the Roman republic; the roads and the banks and mouth of the Tiber were cleared of robbers and pirates; and the tribune was universally regarded as a new founder of Rome.

His government as tribune of the people.

Good effects of the revolution.

Nor was the glory of Rienzi confined to the narrow sphere of the civic territory. Though the court of Avignon could not view so strange a revolution without alarm and displeasure, the deference which Rienzi at first professed for the papal authority either calmed the inquietude or produced the dissimulation of Clement VI.

Extraordinary reputation of Rienzi.

Throughout most of the Italian states the envoys of the tribune were welcomed with extravagant enthusiasm, as if he had already regenerated Rome and consummated the restoration of the ancient glories of her empire. An unbounded veneration for antiquity, which had been constantly increasing since the revival of classical learning, was the cause of this excitation of national feeling. It was nourished and disseminated by numerous men of letters, with whom Italy was now filled, and the charge was most loudly proclaimed by him whose mind was oftener tuned to a gentle theme. The lover of Laura had contracted a friendship for Rienzi and an admiration of his eloquence and spirit, during his embassy to Avignon. Like the tribune, Petrarch cherished the monstrous belief that Rome had an unextinguishable right to her ancient dominion over the universe, and a deep conviction of the practicability of restoring its exercise. He drew exulting presages of the durability of the late revolution; and its first consequences might almost justify this illusion of the great classical enthusiast. Most of the Italian republics sent ambassadors to Rome on the ostentatious summons of Rienzi, to felicitate him on his success, and to deliberate with him on the good estate of Europe; and even many princes were not deterred from courting the friendship of a man who openly elevated the pretensions of the Holy Roman Republic, as he now styled her, above the other powers of the world. Though the other tyrants of Italy treated

Enthusiasm of Petrarch.

his letters with contempt, the lord of Milan sought his alliance; the emperor Louis of Bavaria appealed to him to reconcile his differences with the pope; and the king of Hungary and Joanna of Naples offered to submit their quarrel to his decision.

Errors and fall of the tribune.

The mind of the tribune was not strong enough to support this wonderful exaltation; and the dreams of ideal virtue which had warmed his early fancy, and stimulated his exertions, were forgotten in his prosperity, or abandoned for the indulgence of a selfish and inordinate vanity. Assuming the luxurious expence and unseemly state of a monarch, he dissipated the revenues of the city in idle pomp, and disgusted the citizens by his prodigality and affectation. He adopted the most vain and extravagant titles; and, with more serious imprudence, provoked the enmity and excommunication of the pope by arrogating to himself the sovereignty of the world, and summoning its ecclesiastical chief to his tribunals. He first exasperated the Roman nobles by his capricious tyranny, and then excited their contempt by his sudden repentance. They were tempted to rebel openly, and the discovery that the tribune was deficient in personal courage, increased their boldness, and completed the general conviction of his incapacity for the station to which he had pretended. As enemies multiplied around him, the people forgot his good qualities, and the real benefits which he had conferred on them, to remember only his extravagance and folly: his elo-

CHAP. IV. PART III.

quence could no longer intoxicate them, his summons could no more assemble them in arms for his support; and after an administration of only seven months, no voice opposed his proffered abdication. Resigning his short lived authority he privately withdrew from Rome, and the city relapsed again into its former condition of anarchy and wretchedness.

His subsequent fortunes,

The subsequent fortunes of this celebrated man, whose character has been aptly designated as half fantastic, half heroic, will excite the curiosity of the reader, and I shall relate them in this place, although in the order of time they may be considered to belong rather to the following chapter. After wandering for several years in distress through the cities of Italy, Germany, and Bohemia, he was at length shamefully delivered up by the emperor Charles IV. to the pope, and conducted to the prisons of Avignon. He would scarcely have escaped a sentence of death, if Innocent VI., who had just been seated in the chair of St. Peter, had not deemed it his interest to confide to him the government of Rome. The people of that capital, during years of tumult and disorder, had learnt to sigh for the repose of the good estate and the return of their magistrate.

second administration,

But Rienzi entered Rome again in 1354 under the title, not of tribune, but of senator;—not as the independent chief of the republic by popular election, but as the slave of the pope.

His character had not improved in adversity and exile; he had contracted habits of intempe-

rance, his resolution had not been fortified by danger, his early enthusiasm and virtues had been exchanged for suspicion and cruelty. He was at first received by the Romans with unbounded joy, but his government soon became odious and contemptible; a sedition was excited against him; he was wounded in attempting to gain a hearing from the populace; and, after betraying an unworthy pusillanimity, was taken in attempting to escape from the city, and dragged to execution. Still the multitude hesitated in consigning to an ignominious death the once venerated champion of their liberties, the guardian of their happiness: he was about to profit by the general pause and silence to address them, and his eloquence might yet have touched their compassion and gratitude, when a ruffian near him, dreading the influence of the appeal if he should be suffered to make it, plunged a dagger into his breast. He fell; and the rekindled fury of his enemies pierced his body with innumerable wounds.*

and violent death.

* For the life of Rienzi and these revolutions at Rome, I have principally followed the fragment of Roman History by an uncertain and impartial contemporary (Muratori, Ant. Med. Ævi, vol. 3.) which, I need not mention, is acknowledged to contain the most satisfactory, as it does also the most minute account, of the actions of the famous tribune. But the story of Rienzi is identified with our own literature by the faithful and masterly sketch of Gibbon, c. 70. Mr. Hobhouse, besides enriching the volume already referred to with some judicious remarks on the character of Rienzi, has printed several curious and authentic letters of the tribune. We may easily believe his own declaration in one of them. "Multo vivebat quietius Cola Laurentius

CHAP. IV. PART III.

General dearth in Europe in the middle of the fourteenth century.

Throughout the first half of the fourteenth century, we have seen Italy incessantly afflicted with all the evils of sanguinary wars, furious intestine commotions, and endless revolutions; and we have now arrived at a period of new and more frightful calamities, whose overwhelming and withering influence for a time silenced even the din of arms and the yells of faction. In the autumn of the year 1345 excessive rains, which prevailed not only in Italy but in France, and other countries, either interrupted the sowing of the grain or rotted the seed in the ground; so that, in the following season of harvest, the earth barely yielded a sixth part of its produce of any description. An appalling scarcity began to manifest itself in Italy after the harvests of 1346; and, in the succeeding winter and spring, an universal famine raged throughout the land. In Florence alone the general misery was such that, before the summer, above ninety thousand persons were dependant upon the state for the issue of their daily food, and the wretchedness of the lower orders elsewhere must have been yet greater. For the government of that enlightened republic displayed a foresight and paternal care of its subjects, which were almost unknown to the age. Prodigious exertions were made to alleviate the sufferings of the people, and to obtain corn from all the coasts of the Mediterranean where the

quam Tribunus"—Cola, the son of Laurence, lived much more tranquilly than Cola the Tribune.

wealth of the state enabled her to buy it up. Although a part of this supply was intercepted in the Arno by the distress of the Pisans, the signiory, with a real and uncommon spirit of humanity, turned no stranger from their gates; and while the richer citizens maintained their immediate dependants, the government fed the immense multitude who must otherwise have perished.

Followed by the Great Pestilence.

But the scanty and unwholesome provisions which were every where eagerly devoured, occasioned an alarming increase of disease, and a destructive epidemic was already spreading over Italy, when, in the year 1348, the plague, after devastating the east, was introduced from the Levant by some Genoese vessels. The effects of the preceding scarcity, which had been felt almost all over Europe, favored the progress of this dreadful scourge among a squalid and debilitated population: the infection was conveyed with horrid rapidity from one country to another; and, before the termination of the year 1350, it was computed to have swept away, from one extremity of Europe to the other, three-fifths of the human race.

Frightful ravages of the latter in Italy.

Of the ravages of this horrible contagion, which appears not to have differed in character from the plague of our times, we have numerous accounts in the contemporary Italian writers; and from their narratives of the Great Pestilence—a distinction of fearful import—a picture of human destruction might be composed for which this age of the world has happily no parallel. Whole

CHAP. IV. PART III.

families every where perished together, or were spared only in part by the dissolution of the best feelings and affections of our nature. They who were yet unstricken shunned and fled from the dearest relatives: fathers, even mothers, deserted their offspring; children abandoned the death-bed of their parents; husband and wife, brother and sister, forsook each other in the last hour of agony. The dead were so numerous that it was impossible to perform the solemn rites of religion, and their bodies were frequently indebted for a hasty burial only to the fear of the survivors that the air would become fatally corrupted. In the cities the ordinary business of life was wholly suspended, in the country the farms were left without labourers, and the ripe crops wasted upon the straw. The restraints of law, and the rights of property were loosened and disregarded; the common sympathies of humanity were extinguished; and, in hideous contrast to the reign of death, the prevalent belief that fear and melancholy prepared the body for infection, induced many persons of both sexes to drown the sense of danger in revelry and debauch. Every law of God and man was forgotten.

Of the numbers who perished in Italy in the year 1348, it would not be easy to form an estimate, for none of the statistical calculations of that age can be depended upon. But we may gain some idea of the mortality from the comparison of different relations. Florence is declared by her historian to have lost three inhabitants out

of five, and Boccaccio states that 100,000 persons were carried off; we are told that 80,000 died at Sienna—an incredible number—60,000 at Naples, 40,000 at Genoa, seven in ten at Pisa, and that at Trapani in Sicily not a soul survived. The imagination sinks under the accumulated woe which can be measured only by such tremendous results; yet we shall hereafter find that the madness of ambition and crime which engrosses the pages of Italian history was calmed but during the moment of these awful visitations, and that the Great Pestilence had no sooner ceased than it was succeeded by the usual afflictions of war and faction. *

REPUBLICS OF GENOA AND VENICE. 1268—1350

During the period reviewed in the foregoing chapter—from the extinction of the house of Swabia to the middle of the fourteenth century—we have found the affairs of Genoa and of Venice more than once interwoven with the general politics of Italy. We have seen the dissensions of the great Genoese nobles, under the cloak of zeal for the Guelf and Ghibelin interests, attract all the powers of Italy to the siege and defence of

* The introduction to the Decamerone of Boccaccio, the twelfth and last book of Giovanni Villani, and the first of his continuator, afford the fullest original account of the Famine and Great Pestilence. The animated picture of the horrors of the latter, by which the great father of Italian prose has prefaced his inimitable tales, is verified and deepened by the relation of Giovanni Villani; who, after living to record its first ravages, himself fell a victim to them, and left to his brother Matteo the continuation of a history which is extremely valuable for its evident fidelity, and even for its simple and elegant composition.

CHAP. IV. PART III. REPUBLICS OF GENOA AND VENICE. 1268—1350

their city: we have observed the active part taken by Venice, in conjunction with Florence and other states, in the war against Mastino della Scala. But, notwithstanding this occasional connection of the great maritime republics with the ramifications of Italian politics, their history in the period before us still continues detached and distinct from that of the peninsula; and there are several inducements, in their furious naval wars with each other, and in the remarkable and opposite changes which were effected in their constitutions, both to bring their annals under the same point of view, and to separate them from those of Italy in general.

Their rivalry.

It would have been contrary to the experienced course of human passions if, after the gallies of Venice and Genoa had once met in hostile array, there had been any durable peace and friendship between two republics so equal in power and wealth, so eager in mercantile competition, so jealous of maritime and commercial dominion, so haughty and unyielding in spirit. But after the pacification or truce which was produced by their common exhaustion in 1269, the republics maintained towards each other a posture of distrust and suspicion for above twenty years without resorting to arms; and, during that period, Venice even permitted her rival to crush the naval power of Pisa for ever in the war of Meloria, without availing herself of so favorable an occasion to aid the weaker state against her more formidable opponent. Venice had afterwards sufficient cause

to regret the refusal which she returned to the solicitations of the Pisans for assistance, and to discover the false policy of having suffered the moment to pass for humiliating a common enemy. But it would appear as if she were engrossed at this crisis in establishing the right to which she arrogantly pretended of the exclusive navigation of the Adriatic. She asserted her absolute dominion over its waters by imposing a tribute on all vessels which entered the gulf, and even requiring them to repair to Venice, for payment of duties on their cargos, before they proceeded to their destined ports. The Italian states which bordered on the Adriatic and had at least an equal claim with the republic to navigate its surface, naturally resisted this tyrannical pretension; but the arms of Venice easily chastised a feeble opposition which was supported by no maritime strength, and from this period the exclusive sovereignty of the republic over the Adriatic was universally recognized by foreign powers.

Sovereignty over the Adriatic asserted by Venice. 1275

It was as a type of this sovereignty that the doge of Venice annually observed the famous ceremony of wedding the Adriatic. It may be true that pope Alexander III.—in gratitude for the refuge which he had found in the city, just before the peace of Constance, from the hostility of Frederic Barbarossa,—presented a ring to the doge with the declaration that by that token the sea should be subjected to him and his successors as a bride to her spouse: but the appropriateness, perhaps the origin, of the custom may be dated from the

Annual ceremony of wedding the Adriatic.

epoch before us. On the annual return of the feast of the Ascension the doge, attended by all the Venetian nobility and foreign ambassadors, was rowed in the gilded vessel of state, the Bucentaur to the outside of the port, and there solemnly pronounced his espousal with, and dominion over the sea, by dropping a consecrated ring into the waves. *

Wars between Genoa and Venice. 1293

When the smothered animosity between Venice and Genoa was kindled into a flame by the accidental encounter of some of their merchant vessels off Cyprus, the extraordinary wealth and power which the rival republics had derived from an immense commerce were proudly displayed in the magnitude of their armaments. Every season of indecisive operations increased their efforts, until, in the third year of the war, the Genoese put to sea with a fleet of one hundred and sixty gallies, manned by more than thirty thousand combatants. The Venetian fleet was of equal force: but, during that year and the next, the hostile squadrons alternately sought each other without meeting, and the Venetians then detached sixty gallies to destroy the Grecian colony of

* "Desponsamus te, mare, in signum veri perpetuique dominii," were the words of the ceremony.

When pope Julius II., some two hundred years after Venice had established her dominion over the Adriatic, sarcastically demanded of the Venetian ambassador Donati, where the deed was to be seen by which Alexander III. had conferred this sovereignty on the republic, the envoy replied that his Holiness might find it on the back of the donation of Constantine to the Roman see.

Pera. This place was unfortified, and though the inhabitants found a hospitable refuge in Constantinople, the Venetians consumed their houses and property to ashes. The Genoese establishments in the Black Sea shared the same fate. This destruction however proved in the event more serviceable than injurious to the Genoese. The friendship of the eastern emperor permitted them to guard against a similar surprize by fortifying the seat of their colony, and Pera was shortly encompassed with works of such strength as rendered this suburb of Constantinople not only a secure depôt for the commerce of the Euxine, but a citadel from whence the republicans learnt to overawe and insult with impunity the capital of the east. The Genoese were not slow in avenging the conflagration of their colony. Their fleet, entering the Adriatic under Lamba Doria, encountered the naval power of Venice near the 1298
island of Corzola and gained a memorable victory. The doge Andrea Dandolo fell into their hands, and preferred self-destruction to the ignominy of being led captive to Genoa; but seven thousand prisoners graced the triumph of Doria. Of the Venetian squadron sixty-six gallies were burnt and eighteen captured. But this battle, in which the combatants were nearly of equal numbers, was not won without a desperate struggle, and an immense slaughter on both sides. The conquerors were hardly less weakened than the vanquished by their loss on this occasion and their preceding exertions; and a peace was shortly 1299

CHAP. IV. PART III.

REPUBLICS OF GENOA AND VENICE. 1268—1350

concluded which, as usual, without any decided advantage, left both republics in common exhaustion.

This pacification was frequently broken during the first half of the fourteenth century by the mutual hatred which the Genoese and Venetians constantly cherished; but their desultory hostilities were attended with no interesting circumstances or very serious consequences, until some commercial disputes in the Black Sea gave rise, about the year 1350, to a more determined contest which will be related in the following chapter. For great part of the period, which I may thus dismiss in a few words, Genoa was convulsed to her centre by the civil wars in which her Guelf and Ghibelin nobles contended for the supremacy. But Venice was more fortunate in the employment which she gave to her arms; and we have seen that in the only important operations wherein she engaged off her own element, her interference in the affairs of Italy was followed by the cession which Mastino della Scala made to her of Treviso
1338 and its district. This was her first acquisition of territory on the main land of Italy: beyond the immediate shore of the lagune.

The constitutional changes at Venice and Genoa, which terminated in the opposite results of oligarchy and democracy, are more deserving of our attention than the progress of foreign hostilities between these republics. I have endeavoured, in an earlier part of this volume, to trace the course of gradual and silent innovation by

Changes in the Venetian constitution.

which the great council of Venice became not only vested with the appointment of the executive government, but usurped to itself the nomination and control of the electors who were to renew its own body. The rights of the people had thus lapsed into the hands of their representatives almost without their perceiving the loss; and the nobles who, by the usual influence of high birth, had always obtained the great majority of seats in the legislative body, were in fact the sovereign citizens of the state.[9] As they were neither supported like the feudal aristocracy by numerous bands of armed vassals, nor accustomed to a life of licentious impunity, they never exasperated the lower people by the tyranny and insolence which made the nobles hateful in other Italian states. They possessed no rural castles, they had no retainers to garrison fortresses in the heart of the city, and their defenceless palaces were only distinguished by superior magnificence from the houses of the citizens among whom they peacefully dwelt. But the moderation which was thus forced upon them was in its consequences infinitely more dangerous to the freedom of the commons, than the intolerable excesses of such a nobility as that of Florence. The Venetian people were not provoked by personal indignities to discover the progress of aristocratical encroachment, until ages of insensible usurpation and unsuspicious submission had riveted their chains. When the popular jealousy was at length awakened, an hereditary aristocracy had in effect

CHAP. IV. PART III. REPUBLICS OF GENOA AND VENICE. 1268—1350

been created; and it was manifested that the firm and vigorous government which this order had engrossed, was more than a match for the people who had so long been habituated to its sway.

On the death of a doge in 1289, while the committee of the great council, which had been formed by the admixture of ballot and suffrage in the usual manner, were deliberating on the choice of a successor, the people assembled in the place of St. Mark, and proclaimed Jacopo Tiepolo, a man of ancient lineage and irreproachable virtue, doge of Venice by their own election. But this nobleman was firmly attached to the aristocratic party, and immediately withdrew from the city to avoid the proffered dignity; and the committee of the great council, after suffering the popular ferment to subside, elevated Pietro Gradenigo to the vacant dignity. This choice was peculiarly odious to the people from the violent character of Gradenigo, and the intemperate zeal which he had always evinced in favor of the aristocracy. Yet, notwithstanding the hatred of the commons towards him, no opposition was made to his reign; and he even successfully commenced and perfected the series of enactments which, in three and twenty years, completed the triumph and perpetuated the tyranny of the oligarchy.

Closing of the great council. 1297

It was, while the public attention was occupied in the war against Genoa, that the doge carried in the legislative body that celebrated decree which has since been distinguished as the

closing of the great council (serrar del consiglio). As the selection of members for the great council had generally revolved either on persons who had sat before or at least on individuals of the same families, the useless ceremony of annual nomination was abolished by this law; the council of justice or "forty" balloted upon the name of each member who already sat, and whoever gained twelve approving suffrages out of forty preserved his seat. Vacancies by death or rejection were supplied by a similar ballot, from a list of eligible citizens which was annually prepared by three chosen counsellors. The artful construction of this decree prevented its full tendency from being discovered, since it appeared to leave the prospect of admission open by successive vacancies to all citizens of merit. But subsequent enactments within three years forbade the three counsellors from inserting any citizen on their list, whose ancestors had not sat in the great council; and at length the exclusive aristocracy of birth which these laws had established was freed from all elective restraint. By the crowning statute of hereditary rights, every Venetian noble whose paternal ancestors had sat in the great council became himself entitled to the same dignity on completing his twenty-fifth year. On proof of these qualifications of descent and age, his name was inscribed in the golden book of nobility, and he assumed his seat in the great council, whose numbers were no longer limited.

Final establishment of the oligarchy. 1319

Conspiracies against its usurpations.

These usurpations were not accomplished without discontent, and resistance, and effusion of blood. Insidiously as they were prosecuted by Gradenigo, the people were no longer blinded to the servitude to which they had been reduced, and their indignation was shared by the wealthy commoners and even by some men of ancient birth, who found themselves, by the operation of the first laws which followed the closing of the great council, deprived of participation in its dignities. Two remarkable conspiracies were organized for the overthrow of the oligarchy while these innova-
1300 tions were in progress. The first, which was headed by three commoners, was discovered by the vigilance of Gradenigo before its explosion, and its leaders executed within a few hours; the second, which was formed ten years later, was of a more formidable nature. Boemond Tiepolo, the son of the nobleman who had formerly rejected the popular favor, and the chiefs of two other of the most ancient families of Venice, who had all causes of animosity against the doge, were
1310 the principal conspirators: they associated themselves with the people and with the nobles who had been excluded from the great council, in a plot to assassinate Gradenigo and restore the old forms of election. So well concealed was their project that the doge had only reason for suspicion on the evening before its execution, by the intelligence of an unusual assemblage at the palace of Tiepolo. But Gradenigo passed the

night in active preparations for defence, and when the conspirators, after raising the populace, marched at day-light to the place of St. Mark from different quarters, they found it barricaded and occupied by the doge and the partizans of the oligarchy. The peculiar construction of the city opposed every obstacle to the attack of the insurgents: they were repulsed with loss, some of their leaders were slain, and, on the arrival of troops from the garrisons of the neighbouring islets, the victory of the government became complete. Tiepolo escaped, but several of his principal associates were beheaded, and the rest sentenced to exile.

Institution of the council of ten. 1310

The terror with which this conspiracy inspired the oligarchy even after the immediate danger was past, gave rise to the establishment of the most singular and odious part of the Venetian government. To observe the movements of the conspirators who, after their flight or banishment, still hovered on the shores of the neighbouring continent, and to watch over the machinations of the numerous malcontents in the city, the great council erected ten of its members into a secret tribunal of despotic though temporary authority; and this institution which was originally intended only for these special purposes, became at once an integral and most formidable portion of the executive administration. Its existence, after a few successive renewals, was confirmed by a statute of annual election; it was associated with the doge and signiory of six;

CHAP. IV. PART III. REPUBLICS OF GENOA AND VENICE. 1268—1350

and the consolidated body was vested with unlimited and dictatorial power over the doge himself, the senate of sixty, the great council, and all the magistracy of the state. The famous council of ten therefore was in reality composed of sixteen members besides the doge, who was president for life. The ten black counsellors, as they were termed from the colour of their gown of office, were chosen annually by four different deliberations of the great council; but the six members of the signiory, who were known by their robes as the red counsellors, were renewed, half at a time, every four months.

Its despotic powers.

Increased vigour of the republic under its direction.

The creation of the council of ten certainly strengthened the executive government of Venice, and gifted it with a vigour and constancy of purpose which could never have distinguished the foreign or domestic policy of so numerous a body as the great council or even the senate. The entire control of affairs abroad and at home passed into its hands. From the æra of its establishment the conduct of the republic towards other states was for several centuries marked by a vigilance and firmness in the execution of her projects, by an impenetrable secrecy and a shameless perfidy, which rendered her at once formidable and hateful. But it was in the gloomy tranquillity which reigned in the populous streets of Venice, while every other republican city of Italy was disturbed by the incessant ebullition of popular feeling, that the mysterious tyranny of the council of ten wore its appalling distinction. No dignity

Its mysterious tyranny over Venice.

was a protection against its resistless authority, no spot was sacred from its inquisitorial intrusion. The nobles themselves who yearly created it, were the trembling slaves of its immeasurable jurisdiction; the rights of the highest and the lowest citizen were alike prostrate before it. The innocent and the guilty were equally exposed to the stroke of an invisible power, whose jealousy never slumbered, whose presence was universal, whose proceedings were veiled in profound and fearful obscurity. Individuals disappeared from society and were heard of no more: to breathe an inquiry after their fate was a dangerous imprudence, and even in itself an act of guilt. Before the council of ten the informer was never confronted with the accused; the victim was frequently denied a hearing, and hurried to death or condemned to linger for life in the dungeons of state: his offence and its punishment, untried and unknown. The detestable influence of a secret police pervaded the city; the sweet privacy of domestic life, the confidence of familiar discourse, were violated by an atrocious system of vigilance which penetrated into the bosom of families. Scarcely a whisper of discontent escaped the ear of the hired spy; private conspiracies against the government were immediately detected; and popular assemblages and revolt were impracticable in a city so intersected with innumerable canals.

To such a state of servitude had the aristocracy of Venice reduced themselves and the people, in the effort to guard the privileges of hereditary

CHAP. IV. PART III. REPUBLICS OF GENOA AND VENICE. 1268—1350

descent: privileges which were held only on terms that might seem to render life itself as worthless as it was insecure. Yet though, at the annual elections of the council of ten, the nobles had only to withhold their suffrages from its destined members to suppress this execrable tyranny at once, it was still renewed until the extinction of the republic. The hope of sharing in its functions reconciled the nobles to its continuance; the increasing grandeur of the state under its government gratified an unworthy ambition with lucrative employments; and when, in later times, some disposition was shown in the great council to suffer an institution to expire which had become yearly more oppressive, a conviction that centuries of degradation had rendered its power essential to the existence of the vicious state insured its perpetuity.

Domestic fortunes of Genoa.

I have been obliged to relate at some length the course of these usurpations which slowly converted the ancient freedom of Venice into an oligarchical tyranny: the single revolution by which the Genoese people threw off the yoke of a nobility, whose civil wars had been so long fatal to the public happiness, may be told in fewer words. After the expulsion of two of the four great families and the siege of Genoa in 1318, the Doria and Spinola had established themselves with the Ghibelins their followers at the sea-port of Savona in the territory of the republic. From thence they not only waged for several years a destructive civil war by sea and land against the

Fieschi and Grimaldi who with the Guelf party were dominant in the capital, but acted in all respects as if they had founded at Savona a distinct and rival commonwealth to oppress their country. It required seventeen years of incessant and furious contests to convince the people of the folly and iniquity of the fruitless strife in which they were involved by the quarrels of these turbulent families: an accommodation was then effected 1331 between the adverse parties, and the strength of the republic was once more united within the capital. But the result of this pacification was far from producing contentment among the people. They found that the whole powers of government were still usurped by the leading nobles, and that as the Spinola and the Doria, the Fieschi and the Grimaldi, alternately prevailed in the struggles of faction, they engrossed all the great functions of magistracy and of military and naval command for the members of their own houses to the exclusion of the rest of the citizens. All the troubles of the state for nearly a century might be traced to their ambition and rivalry; and when they dared to abolish the office of abbot of the people—a magistrate who appears to have been created, like the tribunes of Rome, for the protection of the plebeians against the aristocracy—it became evident that they designed to elevate an oligarchical tyranny on the necks of their countrymen. The temper of the Genoese had not been prepared, by a slow and insidious policy, for the tame endurance of such a yoke;

and some discontent which broke out among their seamen swelled to a general popular insurrection. The first object of the people was only the restoration of their magistrate; and the government, which was then in the hands of the Doria and Spinola, was compelled to accede to their demand. But while a general assembly of the nobles and people awaited the result of the election which was entrusted to twenty plebeians, an artisan suddenly directed the favor of the impatient crowd to Simon Boccanigra, a nobleman whose unblemished and temperate character had endeared him to the citizens. It was immediately declared by acclamation that Boccanigra should be abbot; but he reminded the people that his birth disqualified him from holding a plebeian office; and a mingled cry was then raised that he should be signor or doge. The former of these titles was associated only with tyranny, the latter with the limited powers of a republican chief; and the voices of the great majority of the people proclaimed Simon Boccanigra the first doge of the Genoese republic. A council of popular election limited his authority, the tyranny of the old oligarchy was overthrown, and, for several years, Boccanigra, who made an impartial and glorious use of his power, administered the domestic and foreign government of the republic with vigour and success.—Thus almost at the same epoch which confirmed the servitude of the Venetians, the commons of Genoa triumphantly vindicated their political rights; and, in the continued strug-

Creation of the first doge. 1339

gle between these maritime rivals, the bold spirit of a free democracy might seem to ensure an easy victory over an enslaved and degraded people. Yet so uncertain is the course of human fortune, so superior the influence of situation and accident to the fairest promise of national character, that we shall hereafter observe the meridian splendour of Venice coeval with the decline of the glory and independence of Genoa. *

* Sandi, Stor. Civ. Venez. P. 2. b. 5. cc. 1—11. Georgii Stellæ, Annales Genuens. pp. 1071—1076. (in the seventeenth volume of Script. Rer. Ital.) Daru, Hist. de Venise, vol. 1. pp. 419—611. Sismondi, parts of chapters 28 and 34.

CHAPTER V.

FROM THE MIDDLE, TO THE END OF THE FOURTEENTH CENTURY. A. D. 1350—1400.

PART I.

Political State of Italy at the Middle of the Fourteenth Century—Military System—Exclusive Employment of foreign Mercenaries—Companies of Adventure—Invention of Gunpowder and Cannon—Affairs of Genoa and Venice—Their Commerce in the Black Sea—Furious War between the Republics—Great naval Battle in the Bosphorus—Battle of Loiéra—Total Defeat of the Genoese Fleet—Genoa surrenders her Liberty to the Lord of Milan, and continues the War with Venice—Destruction of the Venetian Squadron at Sapienza—Termination of the War—Marin Falieri, Doge of Venice—Conspires against the Oligarchy, and is beheaded—Unfortunate War of Venice with the King of Hungary—Loss of Dalmatia—Affairs of Tuscany—War between Florence and the Lord of Milan—Siege of Scarperia—Peace between Florence and Milan—The Great Company of Adventure levy Tribute in Tuscany—War among the Lombard Signors—The Emperor Charles IV. in Italy—Continued War in Lombardy—Fortunes of Pavia—Crimes of the Visconti—Prosperity of Tuscany—War between Florence and Pisa—The White, or English Company of Adventure—Sir John Hawkwood.

CHAP. V. PART I.

IN passing through the quick series of wars and revolutions which crowd the annals of Italy during the first half of the fourteenth century, it has

Political state of Italy at the middle of fourteenth century.

been impossible to avoid altogether the confusion and perplexity, with which so many unconnected details and rapid transitions must necessarily fill the mind of the reader. Before we resume our passage in the present chapter through the remaining half of the century, it may not, therefore, be useless to pause for an instant at the point to which we have already conducted our subject, and to collect the scattered results at which we have arrived into a brief and general summary of the condition of Italy in the middle of the fourteenth century. Of the two great powers whose rivalry had so long desolated Italy with contending factions, neither possessed any longer its pristine influence. The personal talents and activity of Henry VII. had for a moment, in the beginning of the century, swelled the form of imperial pretensions into the substance of authority; but, after his short expedition and sudden death, the extravagant respect of the learned Italians for the prerogatives of the successors of Augustus was almost the only vestige of their sovereignty. After Henry VII., Louis of Bavaria had indeed appeared in Italy, but the long absence of former emperors which left their rights over the peninsula in abeyance, was far less injurious to their power than the disgust and contempt which followed that avaricious and ungrateful monarch in his return to Germany.

The removal of the seat of the popedom beyond the Alps, the servile devotion of the pontiffs of Avignon to the sovereigns of France, the selection

CHAP. V. PART I.

of natives of that country almost exclusively to fill the papal chair and the sacred college, and the scandalous debaucheries and corruptions of the papal court which even exceeded all former reproach, had altogether conspired to alienate the minds of the Italians from a foreign and vicious church. Clement V. who had transported the Roman See to France, John XXII., Benedict XII., and Clement VI. had all rested in voluntary exile from the ancient capital of Christendom; and the last of these pontiffs, who still reigned at the period before us, continued by the dissoluteness of his own life to augment the shame of the papacy. While various causes had thus weakened the influence of the imperial and papal chiefs, the third power which the popes had elevated to champion their cause, and which had aspired to supersede the empire in its general sovereignty over Italy, had now fallen into utter decay. Under the feeble and disgraceful administration of Joanna, the kingdom of Naples was so far from maintaining the preponderance which it had possessed under the two Charleses and during great part of the reign of Robert, that its existence was almost forgotten in the political balance; and so slight was the connection between the Two Sicilies and the rest of Italy for fifty years from this epoch, that I shall without inconvenience detach the meagre narrative of their affairs from the general course of the present chapter.

While Italy was thus freed from the control of the papacy, the empire, and the Angevin dynasty

of Naples, the principalities or tyrannies which had been founded upon the ruins of freedom in northern Italy, and the few republics which had still preserved their existence, were left without any common enemy to dread, and without rival chiefs to animate and envenom the atrocious spirit of faction. The incessant revolutions of the last hundred years had extinguished many obscure states and petty tyrants; and proportionately lessened the difficulty of surveying the political geography and aspect of Italy. The whole of its great northern province of Lombardy, from the Alps to the line at which the peninsula is narrowed by the gulfs of Genoa and Venice, was possessed, after the subversion of inferior signors, by the five princely houses of the Visconti of Milan, the Scala of Verona, the Carrara of Padua, the Gonzaga of Mantua, and the marquisses of Este at Ferrara and Modena: the counts of Savoy and marquisses of Montferrat, whose domains bordered on the western dependencies of the Visconti, might perhaps be numbered among the Lombard potentates, but though these sovereigns had sometimes acquired an authority over the cities of Piedmont, their history has little interesting connection in these ages with Italian politics.

From the southern extremities of Lombardy to the northern frontiers of Naples, we may consider central Italy as divided generally by the chain of the Apennines into Tuscany westward and Romagna on the east: Rome and the old patrimony

CHAP. V. PART I.

of the church intervening between the former province and Naples. As Lombardy was the peculiar throne of tyranny, so was Tuscany the great theatre of liberty: the commonwealths of Florence and Pisa, and the minor republics of Sienna, Perugia, Arezzo, &c. covered its surface. The province of Romagna, notwithstanding the formal cession which the emperor Rodolph had made of its sovereignty to the Roman see, acknowledged little obedience to the popes of Avignon: for the most part subject to petty tyrants, there is little in the obscurity of its condition and annals to challenge our interest. Rome and its surrounding territory, after the fall of Rienzi, will scarcely invite greater attention. Such then, glancing the eye to the narrow maritime domains of Genoa and Venice, is a rapid survey of the political divisions of Italy in the middle of the fourteenth century: I am sensible that it is not minutely accurate, but it is at least sufficiently so for the general purpose of history. A few observations upon the condition and views of the different states may serve to elucidate the character of subsequent transactions.

Of the five Lombard principalities, that of Milan was infinitely the most powerful. The slothful Gonzaga never made any considerable increase to the Mantuan territory; the dominion of the Carrara over Padua was recent; the princes of Este, sunken in debauchery and crime, had degenerated from the ancient activity of their house; and Mastino della Scala who, until his

humiliation by the Venetians and Florentines in 1338, had been so formidable in Italy, dying at this epoch, the state of Verona fell under his execrable successors into insignificance. The united forces of these four houses were unequal to a struggle with the lords of Milan. Since the restoration of Azzo Visconti in 1329 to the power of which Louis of Bavaria had ungratefully deprived his father, no occasion has presented itself for my noticing the fortunes of his house. But though the private character of Azzo was sullied by the treacherous assassination of his uncle Marco, his public administration was just and temperate; and, during a reign of ten years, he not only extended his dominion by wresting numerous Lombard cities from lesser signors, but gained the universal affection of his subjects. On his death at an early age without issue in 1339, his uncles Luchino and Giovanni, the surviving sons of the great Matteo, succeeded jointly to his power. Inheriting the talents and ambition which had hitherto distinguished all their house, without possessing the same public virtues as Azzo, the brothers by their activity, their lust of dominion, their ferocious cruelty, and perfidious intrigues, excited the alarm and suspicion of all the Italian states. Giovanni, who had been bred to the church, resigned the government to Luchino to accept the archbishopric of Milan; but, on the death of his brother who was poisoned by his wife in 1349, he united in his person the spiritual and temporal command of the state which now com-

CHAP. V. PART I.

prehended sixteen of the great cities of Lombardy with all the central parts of the province. The dreadful ravages of the pestilence for a short time paralyzed the efforts of ambition and defence; but, from the accession of the archbishop Giovanni, the faithless enterprises of the Visconti, and the well-founded terror with which their continued aggrandizement was regarded, were the great springs of Italian action to the close of the century.

The independence of the Tuscan and maritime republics was particularly endangered by the machinations of so alarming a tyranny; and there were many circumstances in their situation which increased their general peril. Sienna, Perugia, and Arezzo were a prey to virulent factions. Florence, who under the tyranny of the duke of Athens had lost all her former acquisitions of territory, had scarcely recovered from the yoke of that destestable adventurer, when she was still farther weakened by the successive calamities of famine and pestilence. Pisa, no longer a maritime republic, and since her defeat at Meloria directing the current of her strength exclusively towards the politics of Tuscany, had become the most warlike state in the province, and obtained the sovereignty over Lucca in the last war with Florence. But the continual factions which agitated her bosom, the devastations of the late pestilence, and the repugnance with which the numerous people of Lucca submitted to her sway, combined to render the position of Pisa critical

and dangerous. The Tuscan states, thus exposed by their weaknesses or internal dissensions, had every thing to dread from the unprincipled and insidious enterprises of the Visconti: the two maritime republics bent only on the indulgence of their mutual animosity, which some commercial differences in the Euxine had revived in its deadliest spirit, and reckless of other dangers than each anticipated in the aggrandizement of the other, separated themselves altogether from continental affairs to prosecute their own sanguinary quarrel.

Military system.

A remarkable change in the style of warfare, which had become general in Italy since the beginning of the century, is too important in its connection with the political aspect of the peninsula to be passed over without notice in this place. The successive expeditions of Henry VII., of Louis of Bavaria, and of John of Bohemia, had filled Italy with numerous bands of German cavalry, who on the retirement of their sovereigns were easily tempted to remain in a rich and beautiful country where their services were eagerly demanded and extravagantly paid. The revolution in the military art, which in the preceding century established the resistless superiority of a mounted gens-d'armerie over the burgher infantry, had habituated every state to confide its security to bodies of mercenary cavalry; and the Lombard tyrants in particular, who founded their power upon these forces, were quick in discovering the advantage of employing foreign adventurers who

CHAP. V. PART I.

Exclusive employment of foreign mercenaries.

were connected with their disaffected subjects by no ties of country or community of language. Their example was soon universally followed; native cavalry fell into strange disrepute; and the Italians, without having been conquered in the field, unaccountably surrendered the decision of their quarrels, and the superiority in courage and military skill, to mercenaries of other countries. * When this custom of employing foreign troops was once introduced, new swarms of adventurers were continually attracted from beyond the Alps to reap the rich harvest of pay and booty which was spread before them. In a country so perpetually agitated by wars among its numerous states, they found constant occupation and, what they loved more, unbridled licence. Ranging themselves under the standards of chosen leaders —the condottieri, † or captains of mercenary bands—they passed in bodies of various strength from one service to another, as their terms of engagement expired or the temptation of higher pay invited; their chieftains and themselves alike indifferent to the cause which they supported, alike faithless, rapacious, and insolent. Upon every trifling disgust they were ready to go over to the enemy; their avarice and treachery were rarely proof against seduction; and, though their

* Mr. Hallam, vol. i. p. 493, has a few judicious remarks on this unfortunate prejudice in favor of strangers, to which Italy owed so many calamities in the fourteenth century.

† Condottieri — conductors of hired troops—from the Latin *conducere*.

regular pay was five or six times greater in the money of the age than that of modern armies, they exacted a large gratuity for every success. As they were usually opposed by troops of the same description, whom they regarded rather as comrades than enemies, they fought with little earnestness, and designedly protracted their languid operations to ensure the continuance of their emoluments. But while they occasioned each other little loss, they afflicted the country which was the theatre of contest with every horror of warfare; they pillaged, they burnt, they violated and massacred with devilish ferocity.

Companies of adventure.

Such were the ordinary evils which attended the employment of the foreign condottieri and their followers in the quarrels of Italy. But some years before the middle of the fourteenth century, these mercenaries had adopted a new system of action which deprived the weary country of all hope of relief from their ravages, short as it usually was, which occasional pacifications had before afforded. This was the formation of companies of adventure by the union of numerous bands of the foreign mercenaries who, when not in the service of any particular power, made war under some general leader on their own account, invading the dominions of one state after another, pillaging and laying waste the country, or exacting enormous contributions as the price of their forbearance. Before this custom had been reduced into a regular system, the formidable demeanour of the German bands who mutinied

CHAP. V. PART I.

against Louis of Bavaria in 1328, and the conduct of the mercenaries of the same nation who were disbanded by Venice and Florence ten years later, after the war against Mastino della Scala, had given an appalling presage of what Italy had to dread from such troops. Upon the last occasion one of the Visconti, who had quarrelled with Azzo, induced these mercenaries to second his desire of vengeance against the chief of his family, by offering to lead them to the plunder of Milan. They formed themselves into an independent army under the title of the company of St. George; and though they were overpowered and defeated by the troops of Azzo, the fury and desperation with which they fought when thus armed against society, contrasted with the want of vigour which characterized their service when employed for others, excited the attention and alarm of every Italian government. It was only four years after this that, on the close of the war in 1343 between Florence and Pisa, a German adventurer, Werner, who is known in Italian history as the duke Guarnieri, persuaded a body of above two thousand of his mounted countrymen, who were disbanded by the Pisan republic, to remain united under his orders and to subject states indiscriminately to tribute or military execution. This ruffian whose hand was against all mankind, indulged his followers in the commission of every atrocity; he declared himself by an inscription which was blazoned on his corslet "the enemy of God, of pity, and of mercy," and

he levied contributions or inflicted desolation on most of the lesser states of Italy, until his followers were desirous of retiring into Germany to dissipate their accumulated booty. Appearing again with other condottieri in the Neapolitan wars between Joanna and Louis of Hungary, serving both these sovereigns in turn, and forming a second company of adventure with which he ravaged the papal states, Guarnieri merits altogether the odious distinction of having founded that atrocious scheme of general depredation, which succeeding captains prosecuted on a greater scale and with more systematic deliberation.

It has been truly observed that there is less difference between the tactics of antiquity and those of our times, than between either and the warlike operations of the middle ages. The military principles of the ancients were founded like our own on the employment of infantry, the real strength of armies whenever war has risen into a science. But in the Italian contests of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, though the personal service of the feudal array had fallen into disuse, the old chivalry was only replaced by a heavily armed and stipendiary cavalry, which continued to form the nerve of every army. Successive improvements were effected in the defensive arms of this force, until the cavalier was completely incased in impervious steel, and his horse in a great measure covered with the same harness. This perfection of defence had its striking disadvantages. It paralyzed all activity of movement.

CHAP. V. PART I.

An army of cuirassiers was incapable of performing a long march by the weight of armour; a river, a morass, a mere ditch or a garden wall, was sufficient to arrest the course of such heavy cavalry; operations in mountainous countries were impracticable; and, since the slightest intrenchment presented insuperable obstacles to an assailant, a battle was only possible even on a plain when both armies equally desired it:—an unfrequent contingency, because the encounter, which one combatant sought, it must usually have been the interest of the other to avoid.

The appalling inhumanity with which the condottieri ravaged the theatre of war, was in some measure lightened in its effects by the protection which a simple wall offered against them. Italy was filled with petty village fortresses or castles in which, on the approach of danger, the inhabitants secured themselves and their property. Behind their ramparts the peasantry might defy the assaults of an unwieldy cavalry, and oppose a desperate and successful resistance to the most merciless of enemies, who were unassisted by battering machines or cannon. The tremendous engines of attack, to which all the ingenuity of modern science has failed in opposing any permanent defences, had indeed been already introduced,* but the rudeness of their original con-

Invention of gunpowder and cannon.

* Without repeating the testimony of G. Villani, or travelling over a beaten track of inquiry, I may remark generally that there appears no real foundation for doubting that Edward III. employed artillery at the battle of Crecy in 1846;

struction, their tardy fire and uncertain aim, and the difficulty of transporting them before the expedient of mounting them on suitable carriages was adopted, were all unfavorable to their power and general use. Whatever were the means by which the composition of gunpowder first became known to the nations of Europe, or the exact æra at which this discovery was followed by the invention of cannon and afterwards of small arms, at least two hundred years from the period before us were destined to elapse, before the employment of these implements of destruction had effected that great revolution in the military art, which has altered the moral and political condition of the universe.

Affairs of Genoa and Venice.—Their commerce in the Black Sea.

Passing from this general view of the political state and military system of Italy to resume the course of our narrative, the furious contest which was rising between the maritime republics will first engage our attention. The commercial rivalry of these states in their distant establishments—ever the fruitful source of bloodshed between them—was as usual the origin of their quarrel. Before the progress of navigation had opened the passage to India round the Cape of Good Hope, and rendered the Baltic the outlet of northern commerce, the ports of the Black Sea were the main conduits through which the

and that, though this was the first memorable occasion of its adoption, there is abundant evidence that both gunpowder and cannon were partially known and used in Europe many years earlier.

CHAP. V. PART I.

productions of the east and north flowed into the bosom of Europe. The spices and precious merchandize of India were brought overland in caravans to the southern shores of the Euxine; the timber, the naval stores, the furs, all the raw commodities of Russia, were floated down the rivers which discharge themselves into that vast basin at its opposite side. The Genoese and Venetians, the great carriers of the Mediterranean, had established numerous factories round the whole circuit of the Black Sea to gather the rich produce of this immense traffic; and the colonies of the former people flourished with a splendour which rivalled that of their capital. By their great fortress of Pera they now held the key of the Bosphorus; by purchase from the Tartars they had obtained possession of the scite of Caffa in the Crimea, and rendered the town which they built there the populous and impregnable seat of a prosperous trade; and, in common with the Venetians and Florentines, they held important establishments in the Tartarian city of Tana at the mouth of the Don. A private quarrel in the year 1349 between an Italian and a Tartar in this place, in which the latter was murdered, provoked the vengeance of the khan, and induced him to expel all the Italian merchants from the city. The Genoese opened an asylum to them at Caffa; and the barbarian, forgetting in his fury the advantage which accrued to himself and his subjects from their commerce with the Latins, resolved to drive them altogether from the country. But

the strength of Caffa easily resisted the assaults of his undisciplined hordes; his own coasts were ravaged by the warlike traders; and the total cessation of traffic deprived his subjects of a market for their produce, and of the commodities for which they had been accustomed to exchange it. The Genoese, blockading the mouth of the Don, determined to grant the khan no peace until he should be reduced to permit the erection of a fortified colony for the Latins at Tana; but the Venetians, weary of exclusion from a profitable intercourse, deserted the common cause, reconciled themselves with the barbarian, and violated the blockade. Their vessels in attempting to enter the Don were seized and condemned as prizes by the Genoese; and they immediately armed to revenge the injury and maintain the interests of their commerce. A strong squadron was dispatched from Venice to the scene of contention, and, encountering a smaller Genoese force on the voyage which was also bound for Caffa, captured several gallies.

Furious war between the republics. 1350

The war having thus commenced, both republics eagerly prepared for more serious hostilities. The factions of Genoa were fortunately hushed at the moment in temporary calm, and she could put forth her whole force in the contest; but Venice had not recovered from the depopulation of the Great Pestilence, and was unable to furnish crews for her empty gallies. But she found an useful ally in the king of Aragon, Peter IV., who had himself a cause of quarrel with Genoa. When

CHAP. V. PART I.

Sardinia passed from the Pisan to the Aragonese dominion, several Genoese families had still retained fiefs in the island of which Peter was endeavouring at this juncture to deprive them; and their republic had supported them against him. He therefore readily entered into an alliance with Venice, declared war against her rival, and engaged to man a portion of the Venetian gallies with his Catalan subjects, who were still numbered among the best sailors of the Mediterranean. The insolent defiance with which the Genoese colonists of Pera conducted themselves towards the eastern empire, drew upon their republic the hostility of a third and more feeble enemy. Two years before this the colonists had forcibly occupied some commanding ground near their suburb which they wished to fortify, and braved the impotent efforts of the emperor to chastise their presumption. After defeating his gallies and blockading the port of Constantinople, a temporary accommodation left them masters of the heights which they had usurped; and it now seemed their object to exhaust the contemptible patience of the Greeks by aggravated insults. From the ramparts of Pera one of their balistic engines hurled a mass of rock into the midst of Constantinople: the remonstrance of the emperor produced only an ironical excuse; and next day the Genoese, by a repetition of the outrage, satisfied themselves that the imperial capital was within the range of their machines. The emperor then closed with the proposals of the Vene-

tians, who were pressing him to enter into a league with them against the Genoese; but, in the language of a great historian, the weight of the Roman empire was scarcely felt in the balance between these opulent and powerful republics.

The principal efforts of both parties were directed to the eastern seas. An armament of sixty-four gallies which was dispatched from Genoa under Paganino Doria, after insulting the Adriatic, swept the Archipelago and blockaded the enemy's squadron on that station; until a fleet of fifty Venetian gallies, half of which had been manned at Barcelona, arrived in the same quarter. On their approach Doria steered towards the Hellespont, and Niccolo Pisani, the Venetian admiral, assuming the supreme command of all the Venetian and Catalan armament, prepared to winter in Greece. But such was the impatience of both parties for an encounter that, before the end of January, the hostile squadrons again put to sea, and directed their course towards the Bosphorus. The season was still stormy and dangerous when Doria, who had first reached Constantinople, stationed himself off the mouth of that port to dispute its entrance against his rival. But a violent wind and current setting into the harbour forced the Genoese to seek a shelter for his fleet under the Asiatic shore, and Pisani triumphantly anchored beneath the walls of the eastern capital. The emperor could only reinforce him with eight gallies, but with this addition of numbers Pisani, though the weather was

1351

Great naval battle in the Bosphorus. 1352

CHAP. V. PART I.

hourly becoming worse, immediately issued again from the port to attack the Genoese. The combined squadron numbered seventy-five gallies; Venetian, Catalan, and Greek: the Genoese had only sixty-four, but their vessels were larger. Doria had not been able to form his scattered line, when Pisani bore down upon him, but his pilots were perfectly acquainted with the navigation of the Bosphorus, and the whole fleet, obeying his signal, safely ran in among the rocks and shallows of the Asiatic shore. In gallantly attempting to follow them, the Catalans, who were ignorant of the intricacies of the channels, lost many of their vessels; but, notwithstanding this disaster, the fleets engaged with desperate courage. The storm had now increased with frightful violence, the clouds blackened over the heads of the combatants until the fleets were shrouded in darkness, and the wild waves rolled appallingly over the breakers which every where surrounded them. Yet amidst the deafening clamour and horrors of the scene, the battle continued to rage with undiminished fury, and though the Greek gallies fled at the close of day, the event remained undecided. During a long and stormy night, the struggle was alternately interrupted by the tempest, and resumed as often as the glimmering and flitting lights of the hostile gallies disclosed them to each other, and it was not until morning broke over the fleets and the hurricane calmed, that the extent of their mutual loss was ascertained. The sea was covered with wrecks and carnage: the

Genoese had lost in all thirteen gallies, but they had captured double that number with eighteen hundred men, and the remains of the Venetian and Catalan fleet sought safety in a Grecian port. The Catalans, who had performed prodigies of valour, had to lament the death of their admiral; many distinguished Venetians had also fallen; and the slain of the allies exceeded two thousand. The Genoese bought their victory dearly if it be true that, of their nobility alone, above seven hundred perished in the fight.

After refitting his squadron at Pera, Doria prepared to blockade Pisani in his harbour, but the Venetian succeeded in passing through the victorious squadron in a strong gale, and, quitting the Grecian seas, conducted his remaining force without further loss to Venice. Doria, left without an opponent, easily reduced the pusillanimous Greeks to sign a separate peace with Genoa, by which they agreed to close all their ports against the Venetians and Catalans; and he then returned with glory to Genoa. But the reverse which the Venetians had sustained in no degree damped their resolution; and in concert with the Catalans, they equipped a new armament in the following year, and achieved a brilliant victory which effaced the reproach of their defeat in the Bosphorus. The allied fleet, still under Pisani, which effected a junction off Sardinia, amounted to seventy gallies; besides three of the large round vessels termed *cocche*, which were employed in those ages, each manned by four hundred Cata-

CHAP. V. PART I.

lans. The Genoese, ignorant that the union of these formidable powers had already taken place, put their squadron to sea in the hope of fighting them in detail. They were now commanded by a Grimaldi: for it is observable that, notwithstanding the revolution which had deprived the four great families of their influence at home, the republic almost invariably entrusted some individual among them with the supreme naval command. When Grimaldi, with only fifty-two gallies, fell in with the enemy near Loiéra on the Sardinian coast, he discovered the superiority of their united force too late to avoid a combat.

Battle of Loiéra.—Total defeat of the Genoese fleet. 1353

The day was calm; the Genoese trusted that the three great vessels, whose motion depended on the wind alone, would be unable to move; and courageously lashing all their gallies together, except a few to protect the wings of their line, they slowly rowed towards the enemy. The allies followed their example, and the two mighty masses were closing, when a breeze suddenly sprang up and filled the sails of the *cocche* which were lying becalmed. These great vessels then steered towards the Genoese flank, and at once determined the event of the day. After an obstinate defence in which they lost two thousand men, the Genoese were utterly defeated. Part of their fleet, casting off from the line, fled under Grimaldi himself; but thirty gallies with three thousand five hundred men, the flower of the republic, surrendered to the victors.

The arrival of Grimaldi at Genoa filled the city with mourning and despair. The national calamity was aggravated by the mutual reproaches and dissensions which it occasioned among the citizens; and this people, who passed for the freest and proudest of the universe, suffered themselves to be so overwhelmed with consternation and fury, that they could imagine no safety and meditate no vengeance but under a foreign master. With strange infatuation they deposed their doge, and voluntarily offered their necks to the yoke of the lord of Milan. The wily Visconti gladly accepted the signiory of Genoa. A Milanese governor and garrison were received into the city, and Visconti immediately supplied the senate with money to equip a new fleet: as if his gold could recompense the Genoese for the loss of their freedom. He also vainly endeavoured to induce the Venetians to terminate a war, from the prosecution of which he could derive no advantage. But the virulent hostility of the Venetians was yet unsatisfied, they declared war against the new signor of Genoa himself, and both parties redoubled their efforts to prosecute the struggle with vigour. The Genoese with the aid of Visconti equipping a squadron of thirty-three gallies, placed their force under Paganino Doria. This great admiral, to whom they were already indebted for their victory in the Bosphorus, after appearing in the Adriatic and striking terror into Venice, who was left defenceless by the absence of her fleet off Sardinia, sailed for the Grecian seas; whither

Genoa surrenders her liberty to the lord of Milan,

and continues the war with Venice.

CHAP. V. PART I.

Pisani, who yet commanded the Venetians, shortly followed him with thirty-five gallies. The two admirals vainly sought each other, until Pisani had put into the port of Sapienza in the Morea to refit, when Doria appeared off its entrance and offered him battle. Pisani had sent up part of his fleet to careen at the head of the harbour, which was very long, while he guarded its narrow mouth with the rest of his gallies; and remaining in this strong position notwithstanding the taunts of the Genoese, he determined not to fight until his whole fleet should have completed their repairs.

Destruction of the Venetian squadron at Sapienza. 1354

The fortunate temerity of young Doria, the nephew of the Genoese admiral, gave a fatal issue to this resolution. The youth boldly steered his galley between the extremity of the Venetian line and the shore, and entered the harbour; twelve other vessels one by one followed in his wake; and Pisani, confident that they were rushing into destruction between the two divisions of his fleet, suffered them to pass unopposed. But they were no sooner within the harbour than young Doria led them up at once to the distant head of the port, and impetuously attacked the Venetian crews, whose gallies were moored to the shore, when they least expected it. They were seized with a panic, made but a feeble resistance, and their whole division were captured or destroyed. Young Doria then returned to the mouth of the port to attack Pisani from within, while his uncle assaulted him in front: their success was complete; after a frightful carnage the Venetian

admiral surrendered with his whole squadron; and the Genoese found that, although four thousand Venetians had been slain, they had taken nearly six thousand prisoners of every quality. This contest terminated the war. The navy of Venice, who had already exhausted her strength in prodigious efforts, was nearly extinguished by the loss of a whole squadron and ten thousand of her chosen seamen. Reduced by so heavy a calamity to sue for peace, she purchased it by the payment of 200,000 gold florins to Genoa for the charges of the war, and by engaging to renounce the commerce of Tana.

Termination of the war. 1355

The eagerness of the Venetian senate for the restoration of tranquillity, even upon terms which were little agreeable to the pride of the republic, might be occasioned in part by the imminent danger which the oligarchy had encountered but a few months before from a conspiracy, headed by no less a personage than the doge himself. Marin Falieri, a nobleman who had honorably filled many of the principal offices of state, had been raised in the preceding year to the ducal throne at the age of seventy-six. He was married to a young and beautiful woman; but the dæmon of jealousy violated his repose. At a masqued ball in the ducal palace during the first carnival after his accession, he observed some sighs and glances of love between a young nobleman, Michel Steno, and one of the ladies of the duchess's train, and immediately commanded the gallant to quit the assembly. Steno, under the momentary irri-

Marin Falieri, doge of Venice,

CHAP. V. PART I.

tation excited by this insult, indulged his pique, as he passed through the adjoining council chamber, by writing on the ducal throne two lines which reflected on the honor of the doge and the purity of his wife. * This pasquinade, of which Steno was easily discovered to be the author, filled the old doge with uncontrollable indignation. He viewed it as an insult of offensive and deadly poignancy, and endeavoured to make it a crime of state; but the council of ten contented itself with leaving the cause to the decision of the forty of justice, of which council Steno was himself a member, and he was sentenced only to a short imprisonment. This lenity so exasperated the irascible and jealous dotard against the whole aristocracy that, availing himself of the discontent of several plebeians who had been personally insulted by the arrogant nobles, he engaged them in a conspiracy to raise the city and massacre the whole oligarchical order. The general existence of a plot was discovered; the manner in which the doge treated the information excited the suspicion of the council of ten; they privately arrested several of the accused and put them to the torture; and they then learned from their confessions that Falieri himself was implicated. The sequel is characteristic of the decision and vigour of that stern and mysterious tribunal. After taking instant and effectual measures for the security of the city, the ten summoned twenty

conspires against the oligarchy,

* Marin Falieri dalla bella moglie, altri la gode ed egli la mantiene;

of the principal nobles to assist their deliberations at so momentous a crisis. They secured the person of their chief magistrate, confronted him with his accomplices, heard his avowal of guilt, and condemned him to die. He was privately beheaded before them on the great staircase of the ducal palace;—the spot where the doges were wont to take their initiatory oath of fidelity to the republic. One of the ten, the reeking sword of justice in his hand, immediately presented himself at the balcony to the people, and proclaimed aloud that "justice had been executed on a great offender;" and, at the same moment the gates of the palace were thrown open, and the populace admitted to view the head of Falieri weltering in its gore. Between the detection of the conspiracy and the consummation of this tragedy, there had elapsed only two days; and the election of a new doge was peaceably conducted under the usual forms.

and is beheaded.

In the year after the decapitation of Falieri, the Venetians were involved in a dangerous and unfortunate war with the king of Hungary. Louis, (he who formerly appeared in Italy as the avenger of his brother Andrew), had maintained but few relations of amity with the republic. Distinguished for his active courage, his superior talents, and his generous temper, though these noble qualities were in some degree marred by an inconstancy of purpose, he had raised his kingdom to an eminence of power and splendour unparalleled in its history. He regarded the maritime

Unfortunate war of Venice with the king of Hungary. 1356

CHAP. V. PART I.

province of Dalmatia as a natural part of his inheritance, and the Dalmatians themselves had long shewn their attachment to the Hungarians and their hatred of the Venetian yoke. In the frequent insurrections of the people of Zara and other cities on the same coast, they had always appealed to the sovereignty of the Hungarian kings, and Louis had himself on a former occasion vainly endeavoured to protect their revolt. He had lately shewn his animosity towards Venice by declaring war against her at the instigation of Genoa; and though this measure had not at the time been followed by any important consequences, he now found himself in a condition to make a formal demand of the cession of Dalmatia. Upon the refusal of the Venetian senate to submit to his pretensions, he attacked the republic with prodigious numbers, both in the district of Treviso and in Dalmatia. His armies were composed entirely of a feudal light cavalry, furnished only with the bow and the sword, and with no other defensive harness than quilted doublets, which resisted the stroke of the sabre and the point of the arrow and lance. After appearing in the first campaign at the head of fifty thousand of these vassals, who in their Scythian mode of warfare covered the face of the Trevisan district and left it a desert, Louis, finding the republic inflexible, maintained the war by incessant invasions in smaller numbers, which ruined the Venetian territory and kept Treviso in continued blockade. In these incursions he was secretly

aided by the lord of Padua who, though in alliance with Venice, supplied him with provisions: an injury which that vindictive republic never forgave to the house of Carrara. The Venetians were from the nature of their resources peculiarly unequal to the support of such a warfare; all the cities of Dalmatia fell into the hands of the Hungarian by open revolt or secret treason; and the republic, humbled by so many reverses, sued for peace and left the terms to the generosity of her enemy. Louis was worthy of the confidence: he exacted neither money, nor the cession of the Trevisan district, in which he had taken many castles; but, adhering to his original demand, obliged the Venetians to renounce the sovereignty of Dalmatia, and their doge to expunge that pretension from the roll of his dignities. Upon these terms peace was concluded, and the chiefs of the republic, who had so long affixed to their office the proud designation of dukes of Dalmatia and of three-eighths of the Roman empire, were for a while reduced to the more modest title of doges of Venice. *

Loss of Dalmatia. 1358

The first serious troubles which arose in Tuscany after the ravages of the Great Pestilence had subsided, were occasioned by the ambitious enterprises of the lord of Milan. The archbishop Gio-

Affairs of Tuscany.

* Matteo. Villani, the first eight books *passim*. Sismondi, cc. 40, 41, and part of 44. Daru, vol. i. p. 609, ad fin. vol. iii. ad p. 15. Gibbon, c. 63. (for the Greek war.) The conspiracy of Falieri forms an interesting portion of the fifth book of Sandi (Part II.)

CHAP. V. PART I.

vanni Visconti had scarcely assumed the sovereignty of that state, on the death of his brother Luchino, when his machinations excited the alarm of the Florentine republic. Two brothers of the family of Pepoli, who had succeeded to the signiory of Bologna, with difficulty maintained their power against the papal lieutenant in Romagna; and Visconti, availing himself of their danger, concluded a secret treaty with them, by
1351 which they basely sold the rights of their fellow-citizens, and gave him possession of the place.

This acquisition, by which the archbishop extended his power to the confines of Tuscany, and the alliance which he formed with the petty signors of Romagna, filled the Florentines with well-grounded apprehensions of so active and perfidious a neighbour. Ever the watchful guardians of the political balance in Italy, they were conscious of being the particular object of hostility to a tyrant who aimed at the wide extension of his dominion; and, though their safety was identified with the common cause of independence, they stood alone in the disposition to resist him. The Lombard princes, who had every thing to dread from the preponderance of his power, were either his allies, or too debauched and feeble to offer opposition to his aggrandizement; Pisa was friendly to him from her Ghibelin predilections; and the Guelf republics of Tuscany,—Sienna, Perugia, and Arezzo—trusting to the poor security of their remoteness from the immediate scene of danger, refused to make exertion

or sacrifice to avert it. While clouds were gathering into a storm against her, Florence therefore found herself without other aid than that of the neighbouring little states of Prato and Pistoia, which enjoyed a doubtful independence under her protection, and, rather her subjects than her allies, required the employment of force to prevent their factions from delivering them to the Ghibelin party.

War between Florence and the lord of Milan.

Though the Milanese troops hovered on the frontiers of Tuscany, and Visconti assembled a diet of the Ghibelin chieftains at his capital, he was profuse in assurances of his desire for the maintenance of peace; and he even lulled the suspicions of the magistracy of Florence, until his forces broke through the passes of the Apennines, and attempted to surprise Pistoia. A small body of volunteers from Florence threw themselves into the town in time to secure its preservation; but the crafty Visconti having thus thrown off the mask, his Ghibelin allies poured from all quarters into Tuscany. The lords of Lombardy and Romagna hastened to furnish their contingents to his army; the Ghibelin chieftains who had always retained independent domains in the fastnesses of the Apennines, joined his standard with their vassals; and his general found himself at the head of five thousand cuirassiers, two thousand lighter horse, and six thousand foot, and extended his ravages to the gates of Florence. To this overwhelming force the republic could oppose no resistance in the field: she had no

CHAP. V. PART I.

army on foot, and her government had scarcely any mercenaries in pay; but the passive courage, which always so curiously distinguished her unwarlike population in the contests of these ages, preserved her in this hour of imminent peril. The peasantry threw themselves as usual into the fortified villages which bristled the country, the citizens manned the walls of the capital, and the public confidence remained unshaken. The neutrality of Pisa, too, removed one great cause of anxiety; for the rulers of that state, for once preferring the dictates of sound policy to the virulence of factious animosity, refused to join the Ghibelin lords, their allies, against the Guelf protectress of Italian liberty.

After devastating the open territory of Florence, the numerous forces of Visconti and his confederates soon ceased to be really formidable. All the provisions of the country which had not been destroyed were secured within the rural fortresses; and such was the firm countenance of the peasantry behind these defences, that every petty castle required a regular siege to reduce it. The invaders thus began to be straitened for food; they could no longer subsist in the plain of Florence, and, withdrawing from it by the valley of Marina, they undertook the siege of the little town of Scarperia. Here the superiority of the defensive art, over the assaults of an army whose only real strength was in heavy cavalry, was conspicuously displayed. Scarperia was but indifferently fortified, and yet the Florentine garrison,

of no more than five hundred men, preserved their post with successful valour against the whole Ghibelin army.

The Florentines meanwhile gained time to levy forces and take bands of mercenaries into their service; the republic of Sienna afforded them a tardy succour of troops; and the armed peasantry harassed the enemy, and intercepted the convoys of food which he drew from Lombardy. But so much terror did the power of Visconti at this time excite in Italy, that no chieftain of reputation could be found among the condottieri to provoke the enmity of the Milanese lord by accepting the command of the republican forces; and the Florentines, without a leader of experience, dared not therefore hazard a battle for the relief of Scarperia, which began to be reduced to extremity. But two native captains—the one a Medici—bravely undertook to reinforce the garrison with a handful of men, and under the cover of night dextrously passed through the camp of the besiegers into the place. Their seasonable arrival inspired the garrison with new strength and spirit; and the Milanese general, who had hoped to exhaust and overwhelm them by reiterated attacks and the incessant discharge of masses of rock and showers of missiles from his engines, was thenceforth disappointed in every effort. He caused all the machines employed in sieges to be constructed, but his moveable wooden towers and his battering rams were burnt in a sally; he thrice attempted to carry the walls by

Siege of Scarperia.

CHAP. V. PART I.

open escalade and by surprise, but he was as often repulsed with slaughter in these general assaults; and at length, after his army had endured severe privations from scarcity of food and the unhealthiness of the season, incurred heavy loss and disgrace, and consumed two months in the ineffectual siege of this petty fortress, he withdrew from before it and evacuated the Florentine territory.

While the whole power of Visconti was thus broken against the walls of Scarperia, Florence assumed an attitude of pride and security. She accumulated new levies of mercenaries, she strengthened all her fortresses, and the other Guelf republics of Tuscany concluded a defensive alliance with her. On the resumption of hostilities therefore in the following spring, she was no longer in the same unprepared state as in the preceding year; and Visconti, instead of again invading Tuscany with a single great army, distributed his forces on numerous points, and instigated the Ghibelin chieftains of the Apennines to pour their vassals into the lands of the Guelf republics from various quarters. But after some partial successes, these invasions were everywhere repulsed, and the republics concluded a desultory but glorious campaign by driving the invaders from their territories.

1352

The Florentines, however, not contented with rouzing the Guelf strength of Tuscany against so insidious and formidable an enemy as Visconti, had meanwhile laid a new train for crushing his

power by inviting Charles IV. of Bohemia, then king of the Romans, into Italy. They represented to that monarch that the continued ascendancy of the lord of Milan must be fatal to the remains of the imperial authority in the peninsula, they solicited him to aid them in humbling the ambition of Visconti, and they offered to support him with all their forces and treasure, on his appearance to claim the crowns of Lombardy and the empire. Charles immediately entered into a treaty with them; and the alarm with which these negociations inspired the archbishop, although they produced no other result, together with the continued ill success of the Ghibelin arms, and the apprehensions which he entertained at the moment of papal hostility, induced him to make pacific overtures to the Tuscan republics. His proposals were accepted, and under the mediation of Pisa a peace was concluded at Sarzana, which guaranteed to both parties the possessions which they had held when the war commenced.

Peace between Florence and Milan. 1353

The repose which this pacification procured for Tuscany had lasted only a few months, when the formation of a new and more formidable company of adventure than had hitherto appeared in Italy, renewed the evils of warfare under their most frightful aspect. This army of robbers was drawn together by a Provençal gentleman, Montreal of Albano, a knight of St. John of Jerusalem, who had served with distinction in the Neapolitan wars of Louis of Hungary. Having attracted many of the German condottieri under his stan-

The Great Company of Adventure

CHAP. V. PART I.

dard by the promise of regular pay for their bands, as well as the unbridled licence usual with such companies of adventure, he commenced his ravages in Romagna; and, after devastating that province with fire and sword and extorting contributions, approached the frontiers of Tuscany. His successful career of rapine was a dangerous invitation to the cupidity of all the foreign mercenaries of Italy, and his force had accumulated with such fearful rapidity, that in less than twelve months the Great Company, as it was called, consisted of seven thousand cuirassiers, with above twenty thousand ruffian followers of all descriptions. Montreal had the art, while he indulged this execrable multitude in the commission of every atrocity against the inhabitants of the country, to give regularity to their enterprises, and even to maintain rigorous discipline and order in their camp. When he approached Tuscany, the Guelf republics shewed a disposition to league for their common defence; but he seduced Perugia into a base desertion of the cause by offering her a neutrality; Sienna next purchased exemption from the ravages of the company by a heavy contribution; and Montreal then entered the Florentine territory. That republic was unfortunately at the moment governed by priors of no ability; and, after suffering the company to plunder the country without attempting resistance, they paid a large and ignominious tribute for the promise of two years' deliverance from the presence of these organized freebooters. Pisa

levy tribute in Tuscany. 1354

shared in the disgraceful treaty; and Montreal then drew off his forces into Lombardy, which now presented a new theatre of action for his followers.

War among the Lombard signors.

We have seen how the acquisition of the signiory of Genoa by the lord of Milan involved him in hostility with Venice; and, very shortly after he had concluded the peace of Sarzana with the Tuscan states, the negociations of that republic lit up the flames of war in Lombardy. The lords of Mantua, Verona, and Padua, and the marquis of Este, had all continual causes of complaint against Visconti, who carried his treacherous intrigues into every city under their dominion. But though the whole of these princes dreaded the power and machinations of the archbishop, they dared not singly provoke his open vengeance, and they were too much divided among themselves, and too mutually suspicious, to combine with each other. Venice, however, laboured incessantly to reconcile their differences, and arm them against her enemy and theirs; and she at length succeeded in uniting them in a league with her to attack the Milanese lord. It was this confederacy which summoned the Great Company to Lombardy to enter into their pay; and after ineffectually urging Florence to break the peace of Sarzana and join them, they applied, as she had done, to Charles IV., and invited him into Italy. At the same time Visconti, to frustrate their design, equally courted the friendship of the emperor elect; and Charles who found himself thus alter-

CHAP. V. PART I.

nately the object of solicitation from the republics of Tuscany, from Venice, and from all the Lombard princes, and who was besides on good terms with the papal court of Avignon, saw every obstacle removed which former emperors had experienced in their Italian expeditions. He therefore crossed the Alps; but all the powers of Italy, who had negociated in turn with him to direct his power against their enemies, heard with astonishment that this successor of Augustus was attended only by a small and unarmed train of three hundred cavaliers. Charles, a mean spirited and avaricious prince, had in truth no other views in undertaking this journey, than to receive the imperial crown, and to extort as much money as possible from the Italian states. The results of his expedition were as insignificant as his purposes, and I may therefore pass with rapidity over the circumstances which attended his enterprise.

The emperor Charles IV. in Italy. 1354

Before the arrival of Charles in Lombardy, the archbishop Giovanni Visconti was no more; and the three sons of one of his deceased brothers, Matteo, Bernabo, and Galeazzo, had succeeded without opposition to the sovereign power which he bequeathed jointly among them. The brothers divided the Milanese dominions in such manner that while each had a third as his proper appanage, the capital and the sovereign power rested in common with all. The death of the archbishop produced no peace in Lombardy; and Charles IV. who observed a strict neutrality, and exerted his

mediation between the Visconti and the confederated signors, could only induce the contending parties to sign a truce. The Visconti, after making an ostentatious display of their forces, in contemptuous contrast with his slender escort, suffered him to receive the iron crown of Lombardy in their capital; and he then passed into Tuscany.

1355 The appearance of the new emperor in this province was regarded by the Florentines with alarm and jealousy though they had but lately desired his presence. Notwithstanding his weakness, the respect which the imperial name still excited in Italy rendered him a dangerous visitor for the Guelf republics. Pisa received him with honor, and in that city the Ghibelin chieftains of the Apennines, together with all the partizans of the same faction in Tuscany, crowded around him, and instigated him to revenge on Florence the hostility which she had formerly shewn to his family: to his grandfather the emperor Henry VII., and his father John of Bohemia. On the other hand, the Guelf communities who had undertaken to be guided by Florence in their demeanour towards him, forsook their engagement, and surrendered to this new master the signiory of their republics.

The circumstances which followed are worthy of notice, as they illustrate the feelings of the free citizens of Florence. The rulers of that state were sensible of the danger of the crisis, if Charles should gratify the passions of the Ghibelins by declaring against their republic; and that mo-

CHAP. V. PART I.

narch, whose only object was money, increased their alarm to induce them to purchase his protection. He required of the Florentines a large sum, as the price of the repeal of an imperial sentence of condemnation, which Henry VII. had passed against their city; and engaged, for one hundred thousand florins of gold, to take them into favor, and to confirm their liberties and privileges. But, in his treaty with them, he assumed a lofty style of sovereignty; he obliged their deputies to do homage and swear obedience to him; and, declaring that he restored Florence to the rank of an imperial city, he constituted the magistrates, whom the people should thenceforth elect, perpetual vicars of the empire. The leading men of Florence, who saw that these pretensions were no more than nominal, easily reconciled themselves to a submission which was rendered prudent by existing circumstances; but the high-spirited democracy, more tenacious about words, could with difficulty be induced to ratify stipulations that seemed to admit the renunciation of their sovereignty. The treaty with Charles was seven times presented for confirmation to the council of the people and as often rejected, before the influence and persuasion of the magistracy and principal citizens could bring the popular assembly to a more prudent line of conduct; and, when their efforts at last succeeded, the proclamation of the treaty was heard by the people with silent gloom, as if some heavy disgrace or misfortune had overwhelmed the state.

Shortly after this, Charles IV. being now joined by a splendid and warlike train of the feudal nobility of Germany, who had followed him into Italy according to the laws of the empire to attend his coronation, proceeded to Rome escorted by a brilliant army of German and Italian nobles, and received the imperial diadem in that city. After this ceremony his attendant chivalry immediately dispersed, the Italians to their homes, and the Germans to recross the Alps; and the emperor returned without forces into Tuscany. Without embarrassing the attention of the reader with transactions of little importance or interest, I shall only observe that the remainder of his residence in Italy served but to betray his weakness and expose the defects of his character. The people of Sienna threw off the yoke which he attempted to fix on them, and expelled his lieutenant; he excited general indignation among the Pisans (who had manifested towards him all their ancient attachment to the empire) by his abortive treachery in endeavouring, contrary to the faith of his treaty with them, to free the people of Lucca from their yoke that he might fill his own coffers; and, when he quitted Tuscany, he experienced studied disrespect from the Visconti in his passage through their states, and finally crossed the Alps followed by general contempt and detestation. *

* M. Villani, b. i. c. 58. ad fin, bb. ii. iii. iv. and v. ad c. 57. Sismondi, parts of cc. 39, 42, and 43. Muratori, A.D. 1350—1355.

The character of Charles IV. is painted in very opposite colours by the Bohemian and Italian historians. He was doubtless a very good king for

CHAP. V. PART I.

Continued war in Lombardy

After the return of Charles IV. into Germany, Lombardy, on the expiration of the truce which he had effected between the Visconti and the other confederated princes, still continued the scene of warfare. The marquis of Montferrat, who had long been the ally of the Visconti, deserted them and joined the league of their enemies on some personal cause of offence; the family of Beccaria, who governed Pavia under Milanese protection, revolted and embraced the same party; several other cities followed this example; and the Great Company, now under a German, count Lando, entered the service of the confederates. But the war, which was principally carried on with foreign mercenaries on both sides, proceeded with little vigour, and had no other result than to enrich these adventurers, at ruinous expence to the tyrants who paid them and to the unhappy country in which they served. The condottieri under opposite standards, with proverbial bad faith towards their respective employers, were almost always in an understanding with each other; and purposely avoided decisive encounters to prolong the contest and multiply their gains.

Bohemia: but the merit of his government in his native dominions cannot alter the real nature of his conduct in Italy; and, though I have not enjoyed the same opportunities with M. Sismondi of comparing the text of his modern panegyrists with that of the Italian chroniclers of his times, I may observe with that distinguished writer, that neither the monuments of his magnificence in Bohemia, nor even his good laws, can destroy the evidence which all his contemporaries have borne against him.

After three years of fruitless warfare, therefore, both the Visconti and their enemies became weary of its continuance, and a pacification was concluded upon equitable terms. But the league of the Lombard allies was no sooner thus dissolved, than the perfidious lords of Milan resolved to wreak their vengeance upon Pavia for her revolt, though they had formally recognized the independence of the people of that city by the conditions of the peace. On the other hand the marquis of Montferrat refused to deliver up the city of Asti to Galeazzo Visconti as he had promised, and hostilities were resumed: but with this difference, that the Milanese signors were now at liberty by the neutrality of the other Lombard princes, to direct their whole power against the marquis and Pavia. I need only remark of the former that he supported the unequal conflict with difficulty for several years; but the fortunes of Pavia deserve and shall receive more particular notice. 1358

Fortunes of Pavia.

The people of that city had been rouzed to the reformation of morals and the assertion of freedom by the preaching of a monk of irreproachable character, Fra Jacopo de' Bussolari, who inveighed with powerful eloquence against the corruption of their manners, and the shame of their subjection to dissolute tyrants. He had inspired the citizens with energy and valour; he had led them in successful enterprises against their Milanese enemies, and induced them to re-establish their ancient republic, and to throw off the yoke

CHAP. V. PART I.

of the Beccaria. That family, who had long exercised the signiory, on being thus shorn of their power, reconciled themselves in secret with the Visconti; and, being exiled from the city for their treason, aided those tyrants with their rural retainers. Deserted by the powers of the league after the late pacification, and finding the marquis of Montferrat no longer able to assist them, the unfortunate people of Pavia were utterly unable to contend with the Milanese power; and Fra Jacopo at length himself advised their submission, and, without stipulating for his own safety, negociated a treaty which guaranteed their municipal
1359 liberties under the sovereignty of the Visconti. But when Galeazzo was once admitted into Pavia, he perfidiously violated the engagement, subjected the citizens to a frightful tyranny, and consigned the virtuous monk to a prison in which he miserably terminated his existence.

Crimes of the Visconti.

Of the three joint lords of Milan, the eldest brother Matteo had survived his accession to power but a short time. Sunken in the lowest abyss of sensuality and crime, he had abandoned the cares of government, and was surrounded only by the dishonored wives and daughters of his subjects, whom he had forcibly torn from the bosom of their families. A gentleman of Milan was sent for and commanded by this monster, on pain of death, to bring to the palace and consign to infamy his young and beautiful wife. The outraged husband implored the protection of the brothers of Matteo; and they, though they equalled

him in depravity of heart, dreading lest his unmeasured excesses should drive their common subjects to desperation, hesitated not to remove him by poison. The unnatural guilt of these fratricides was if possible deepened by the cruelties of their subsequent reign. Galeazzo, himself a perfidious and remorseless tyrant, was excelled in wanton ferocity by Bernabo. They jointly laboured to strike universal terror into their enemies by the systematic atrocities which they exercised upon those who fell into their hands. After the conclusion of the war in Lombardy, they selected numerous victims at Pavia and other cities which had attempted revolt; and a contemporary historian has preserved a copy of a public law of Bernabo, which regulated the sufferings of these state offenders. By this execrable enactment, the provisions of which should at once have armed society against the fiend who could dictate them, the Milanese tribunals were directed to protract all capital punishments, during forty days of various and lingering tortures:—but I shall pass to a fairer theme.

Prosperity of Tuscany.

For several years after the expedition of the emperor Charles IV., the Tuscan states enjoyed a season of prosperity and comparative repose, which was less seriously interrupted, than usual in this turbulent age, by internal troubles and open hostilities. During this period Florence, in particular, acquired well-merited honor. She terminated by her mediation a war between the Guelf

CHAP. V. PART I.

republics of Sienna and Perugia; and when the Great Company, in 1358 and the following year, again appeared in this part of Italy, and subjected the other powers to a repetition of disgraceful contribution, she alone resolutely determined to put a period to the shame of submission to these enemies of society, and to refuse all compromise with their demands. But though the Italian governments had hitherto wanted courage to defy this army of robbers, their exactions and audacity had raised general indignation; and even the Ghibelin princes of Lombardy, all of whom they had outraged and betrayed in turn, furnished auxiliaries to the Guelf republic against them. The army which Florence thus assembled was, it is true, principally composed also of foreign mercenaries: but the company, awed by the firm countenance of the republic, shunned an engagement and at last made a disorderly retreat; and Florence not only protected her territory, but humbled the insolence of the condottieri, and had the glory of teaching other states, that protection against their depredations was to be found, not in tribute, but resistance.

At this favorable epoch, too, the security of the Tuscan republics was increased by the subjection of many of the feudal nobles of the Apennines who had hitherto preserved the independence of their fiefs; and, partly by liberal purchases, partly by force, Florence, Sienna, and Perugia all aggrandized themselves by acquiring

the territory of these predatory chieftains. Amidst this prosperity, the domestic repose of all the Guelf republics and of Pisa was not, indeed, undisturbed, and, almost at the same moment, dangerous conspiracies were discovered in each; but these were timely frustrated, and Tuscany had seldom been so tranquil, when rising animosity between Florence and Pisa began to darken the political horizon, and finally to overspread the province with a new storm of war.

War between Florence and Pisa.

The guilt of the original aggression which destroyed the harmony that had for many years prevailed between the two states, rested solely with Pisa. Her government had passed into the hands of the most violent of her Ghibelin citizens, who studiously sought in secret to provoke a rupture, which the signiory of Florence for some time as carefully endeavoured to avert. After wantonly instigating some of their disbanded mercenaries to seize a Florentine castle, the Pisan rulers laid a duty upon all merchandize which entered their harbour; and, contrary to the terms of a former treaty by which the Florentines, who carried on their foreign commerce through this channel, enjoyed freedom from all such impositions, they refused to exempt them from the tax. Finding remonstrance useless, and still resolved if possible to avoid recourse to hostilities, the Florentine signiory adopted an effectual measure for punishing the arrogance of their enemies. They commanded all their subjects to close their mercantile

CHAP. V. PART I. 1356

business at Pisa and withdraw from that city; and by treaty with Sienna transferred the seat of their maritime trade to the small port of Telamone belonging to that republic.

The commerce of Pisa was thus annihilated at a single blow, for all the foreign merchants who resorted thither solely for the Florentine markets, were obliged to change the destination of their vessels to Telamone. The total stagnation of employment, and the consequent ruin which threatened the Pisan artisans, filled that city with clamour; and the government then endeavoured to appease the popular ferment by conciliating the Florentines, and offering to abolish their imposts. But this high-spirited and wealthy people were in their turn inexorable; and a singular contest ensued. The Pisans, arming some gallies, cruized off the Tuscan coast, and used force to oblige the merchant vessels, which were bound for Telamone, to land their cargoes at Pisa free of all duties; and the Florentines, rather than submit to receive their imports in this manner, brought their merchandize at increased expence by land from Venice, from Avignon, and even from Flanders. But such was the spirit which animated a republic that possessed not an inch of maritime territory, that she resolved to inspire respect for her flag even on the seas. She hired armed gallies in Provence, at Genoa, and at Naples; and, with the small squadron which she thus formed, attacked a rival who had once aspired to the dominion of

the waters. But Pisa had long ceased to be a naval power, her strength was directed to the acquisition of continental territory, and so feeble had she become on the waves, that the few vessels in Florentine pay ravaged her coasts and insulted her harbours with impunity.* 1362

* In this petty naval warfare, the Pisan Port at the mouth of the Arno was forced, and the chain which had closed its entrance was brought to Florence, and suspended in festoons, some fragments of which still remain, over the two venerable columns of porphyry that stand before the gate of the beautiful Baptistery. These pillars had been the gift of the Pisans in the beginning of the twelfth century, in gratitude for the kindness of the Florentines who faithfully guarded their city for them, while the strength of their republic was absent on a maritime expedition. "The Pisan chains," says Forsyth, "hang like a fair trophy on the foreign bank of Genoa; but to place them at Florence over those pledges of ancient friendship, betrayed a defect of moral taste."—Remarks, &c. on Italy, vol. i. p. 39. (3d ed.)

A word more with reference to the same page of Forsyth. The charges which are too well authenticated against the Italian republics are sufficiently numerous; and I may be excused, if I am warmed by my subject with some little zeal to vindicate them from others, which appear to be wholly unfounded. Mr. Forsyth, upon the authority, I suppose, of Ammirato, attributes shocking inhumanity to the Florentines against their Pisan prisoners who were taken in this war at the battle of Cascina. But this story of Ammirato should not weigh in the balance against the evidence of a respectable contemporary; and Filippo Villani expressly declares, that the prisoners were humanely and even kindly used and comfortably supplied. Vide b. xi. cc. 98—100.—a testimony which had probably escaped Mr. Forsyth; nor, but for his repetition of a lax calumny, would the question be worth notice. But the concentrated energy which that powerful writer can throw into a single sentence, often renders the philippic of a line a severer condemnation than whole dissertations from other pens.

CHAP. V. PART I.

Meanwhile after repeated injuries on both sides, the smothered animosity between the two republics had broken out into an open contest by land; and, for three years, their territories were alternately laid waste by desultory operations of various success. The forces employed by each party were as usual composed chiefly of foreign cavalry, and Pisa had at one time above six thousand of these mercenary cuirassiers in her pay. The reader would be little interested in the detail of predatory incursions and ridiculous bravades * which occupied the rival republics, and were only suspended by the appearance in Tuscany of the plague. After shewing itself first in Flanders, this terrific scourge spread over Europe at the epoch before us with a raging mortality, second only in horror to that of the Great Pestilence of 1348. Its ravages in Tuscany increased the pressure of a war which weakened the hostile states without any decided

* Petty insults were generally mingled with warlike operations in the Italian contests of the middle ages. Distributing prizes for horse races under the walls of a hostile city, and striking medals in an enemy's territory, were common modes of celebrating the triumph of successful incursions; and the Italian chronicles are full of such feats. Sometimes dead animals were hurled from the engines of besieging armies to insult the defenders; and the Pisans in one of their inroads to the gates of Florence, in this war, hit upon a yet more ingenious expedient for shewing their contempt of the rival republic: they suspended three asses from a gallows which they erected before the walls, and labelled the sufferers with the august names of three Florentine magistrates. The interchange of such compliments is quite in the taste of democracies.

preponderance of fortune. The advantage however upon the whole rested finally with Florence; and when the two republics had at length become weary of ruinous hostilities and mutually desirous of peace, the Pisans engaged, by the pacification which was concluded between them, to pay 100,000 florins in ten years to Florence for the charges of the war; and to confirm the exemption of Florentine merchandize from all duties in their port. Upon these terms Florence agreed to make Pisa again the emporium of her maritime commerce. Tranquillity was thus restored to Tuscany; but just at the moment when Pisa was relieved from the danger of foreign hostility, she fell a prey to the ambition of one of her own citizens, and afforded another example of those strange and sudden revolutions which were so common in Italian states. Giovanni dell' Agnello, a merchant of obscure family, secretly aided by Bernabo Visconti, and supported by the foreign mercenaries of the republic, overthrew her liberties, and assumed, first the dignity of doge, and afterwards, the more despotic title and authority of signor. 1364

The White or English Company of Adventure.

One circumstance in the war between Pisa and Florence may possess some attraction for the British reader. Among the foreign condottieri who served in these campaigns, by far the most celebrated captain was an Englishman; and the palm of martial excellence is conceded by contemporary writers to the bands of our nation who followed his standard. After the peace of Bretigni, which our Edward III. and John of France con-

CHAP. V. PART I.

cluded in 1358, their disbanded soldiery had formed themselves into companies of adventure, several of which, after horribly ravaging the exhausted provinces of northern France, carried their devastations into Provence; and from thence one of them, the White, or English Company, passed * into the service of the marquis of Montferrat, who was still at war with the Visconti. But with the characteristic inconstancy of such adventurers, the company shortly delivered the marquis from their onerous maintenance, by entering the Pisan pay on the expiration of their engagement with him. They had been trained in the wars of Edward III., and the Italian historians speak with admiration both of their valour and of their ability in surprises and stratagems,—the partizan warfare of the times. Their cavalry introduced two new military practices into Italy: the custom of reckoning their numbers by *lances*, and of dismounting to combat on foot. Each lance, as it was termed, was, at least at this time, composed of three † cavaliers, who were bound to

* Our countrymen, themselves no desirable acquisition for Italy, introduced with them a still more appalling evil. They hoped, by shifting their quarters across the Alps, to avoid the frightful pestilence which was then extending its ravages from the north into the south of France: but instead of escaping this scourge, they carried it with them into the Lombard plains, whence it was communicated to the rest of Italy.

† In some, however, of the bands of German mercenaries serving in Italy at this period, every cavalier was attended by a man-at-arms, mounted and equipped like himself. As these German bands were called *barbuti*, from the flowing horse hair which ornament-

each other in a species of association; and as the White Company mustered a thousand lances, besides two thousand infantry, their whole force was five thousand men. Their cavaliers made little other use of their horses than to bear them in their heavy armour to the field of battle, where they usually dismounted and formed an impenetrable and resistless phalanx; and in this close order, with their ponderous lances lowered at the charge and each held by two men, they slowly advanced with loud cheers towards their enemy. Their defensive arms were of the mixed character of plate and mail, which was still retained in England and France, after the full casing of steel had been adopted in Italy. Over their mail-coats of interlaced chain they wore cuirasses of iron; their brasses, their cuisses, and boots, were of the same material; and their array shone with dazzling splendour, for each cavalier was attended by a page whose constant occupation was to burnish his armour.

These hardy English bands, habituated to their own bracing climate, braved with indifference the

ed their casques, this became the general term for cavalry composed like them of lances of two horses.

This custom of computing cavalry by lances was of feudal origin, when the knight, himself the lancer, was attended by several mounted retainers, more lightly armed, who composed with him the full equipment of his lance. But it does not appear that, in the White Company and other mercenary bands, the men of the same lance were any thing more than comrades and equals who chose to serve inseparably together.

CHAP. V. PART I.

utmost rigour of an Italian winter; the severity of no season was a protection against their enterprises; and the light scaling ladders, which they carried in detached pieces, facilitated the war of surprises wherein they excelled. The talents of their leader added to the reputation which these qualities of soldiership obtained for them. This eminent captain, who is called by the Italians, *Acuto,* or *Auguto,* was Sir John Hawkwood, an adventurer of mean extraction, for he is said to have been originally a tailor, who had been knighted by Edward III. for his distinguished services in the French wars. The Pisans entrusted him with the supreme command of their forces in the contest with Florence; and from this period we shall find him passing the long remainder of his life in the incessant troubles of Italy, and deservedly regarded as the most accomplished commander of his times. *

Sir John Hawkwood.

* For the affairs of Lombardy and Tuscany from the departure of Charles IV. to the conclusion of the war between Florence and Pisa, I have continued to consult Matteo Villani, from his fifth book to the end of the work, and the brief sequel of his son Filippo. The history of Matteo terminates with the appearance at Florence of the second great pestilence in 1363, to which he fell a victim, as his brother Giovanni had done to the first, fifteen years before. It is impossible to lose without regret the guidance of this faithful authority. If the personal character of a writer may ever be determined by his works, the mind of Matteo Villani may be pronounced to bear the stamp of integrity and moral beauty.

I am of course also indebted as usual for occasional reference to Muratori (ad ann.) and to Sismondi, (parts of cc. 44—47.)

PART II.

Affairs of the Pontificate—Conquest of Romagna by the Holy See—Scandal of the Papal Residence at Avignon—Pope Urban V.—Restoration of the Seat of the Popedom to Rome—Alliance between the Emperor Charles IV. and Urban V.—League against the Visconti—Arrival of Charles IV. in Italy—His disgraceful Conduct in Lombardy and Tuscany—His Sale of Freedom to Lucca—Revival of that Republic—Grandeur of Urban V.—New Wars provoked by the Visconti—Return of the Pope to Avignon—His Death—War between Florence and the Church—Revolt of Romagna—Arrival of Pope Gregory XI. at Rome—His Death—Election of a new Pope—Violence of the Roman Populace—Urban VI. chosen by the Conclave—His offensive Conduct to the Cardinals—Their Secession—They annul the Election of Urban VI. and substitute Clement VII.—Question on the Validity of Urban's Title—The Great Schism of the West—Domestic Affairs of Florence—Factions of the Ricci and Albizzi—The Guelf Corporation—Tyranny of that Oligarchy—The Albizzi, Chiefs of the Guelf Aristocracy—The Ricci, Leaders of the Democratical Party—Insurrection of the Democratical Faction—Fall of the Guelf Aristocracy—Sedition of the Ciompi—Florence in the Hands of a Mob—Anarchy in the Republic—Patriotism of Michel di Lando—Restoration of Order—Triumph of the Democratical Faction—Administration of its Leaders—Their judicial Murders, Tyranny, and Fall—Restoration of the Guelf Oligarchy to Power—Affairs of Venice—Rupture of the Republic with Genoa—Powerful League against Venice—War of Chiozza—Naval Operations—Total Defeat of the Venetian Fleet—The Entrance into the Lagunes of Venice forced by the Genoese Fleet—Capture of Chiozza—Extremity of Venice—Courageous Spirit of the Senate and People—Their energetic Exertions to

CHAP. V. PART II.

equip a Fleet, and skilful Operations—The Genoese blockaded in the Lagune—Increase of the Venetian Force and Confidence —Surrender of the Genoese Fleet—Continuation of the War— Peace of Turin.

Affairs of the pontificate.

DURING the long and voluntary exile of the popes at Avignon, the intimate connection, which had formerly subsisted between the affairs of the papacy and the complicated politics of Italy, had been almost entirely destroyed; and, in endeavouring to clear the path of the reader through the tangled mazes of my subject, I have scarcely found occasion to arrest his progress through the transactions of the last sixty years, by any notice of papal history. But, at the point which we have now reached in our course, two circumstances revived the influence of the popes in Italy, and will necessarily claim our attention:—I mean the total subjugation of Romagna to the church, and the temporary restoration of the pontificate to its original seat.

The province of Romagna was, as has been noticed in another part of this history, subject to petty signors; and, notwithstanding the solemn cession of the imperial rights of sovereignty, which Rodolph of Hapsburg had made to the church, it acknowledged little obedience to the pontiffs of Avignon. But Clement VI., in 1350, commissioned his legate in Italy to bring all the cities of Romagna, by force or intrigue, under the authority of the church; and supplied him with a body of mercenary troops and a large sum of

money, for the different purposes of force and persuasion. The enterprise was not of easy accomplishment: for the inhabitants of the papal states were, of all the Italians, the only people who had retained their warlike character; and their chieftains, the Malatesti, lords of Rimini, the Ordelaffi of Forli, the Pollenta of Ravenna, the Manfredi of Faenza, and other noble families, instead of confiding the defence of their little states, like the Lombard princes, to German mercenaries, habitually led their own forces, composed of the gentlemen and peasantry of their mountain demesnes. They were themselves a race of skilful and active captains; war was their constant occupation; and, when not engaged in hostilities among themselves, they were usually to be found in the service of the more powerful princes and republics. Their reputation for bad faith was as remarkable as their ability and valour; and, in ages when the contempt of all moral obligations had become too generally the reproach of the Italian character, the Romagnol perfidy was proverbial in the peninsula.

The scheme of Clement VI. for subjugating these chieftains failed of success; for his lieutenant, by a treacherous attempt to wrest Bologna, the only great city of Romagna, from the Pepoli, induced those tyrants, as we have seen, to sell their power to the archbishop Giovanni Visconti, and involved himself in a dangerous war with the Milanese lord. The avarice of the papal court

CHAP. V. PART II.

left the legate without the means of maintaining this contest; Clement vainly thundered his spiritual censures against the archbishop; and Visconti, partly by bribes to the mistress and courtiers of the pope, and partly by the menace of visiting Avignon with an army, obtained the cession of the sovereignty of Bologna, to be held by him as a fief of the church. But, on the death of Clement in 1352, the projects which he had formed, of bringing Romagna under the obedience of the Holy See, were renewed by his successor Innocent VI., and finally accomplished by the unassisted talents and activity of one man.

Conquest of Romagna by the Holy See.

This extraordinary person was the cardinal Egidio Albornoz, a noble Spaniard who had learnt the trade of a skilful general in the religious wars of his own country against the Moors, and improved his capacity for dissimulation and artifice in the intrigues of the papal court. He entered Italy as papal legate in 1353, almost without forces or treasure; and pursuing his designs with vigour and singular address for more than twelve years, finished by completely humbling the tyrants of Romagna, and reducing them into abject submission to the church. He was equal to any of these Romagnol chieftains in the field, he excelled them all in their own perfidious policy. By adroitly tampering with their cupidity and fomenting their mutual jealousies and hatred, he armed them against each other; and, conquering them in succession with their own weapons, he wrested the

little cities of the province from their sway to place them under papal governors. His crowning acquisition was the city of Bologna. The Milanese lieutenant who governed there had revolted in 1355 from the Visconti, and, joining the league of the Lombard princes against their house, had maintained himself in the signiory of the city by this alliance. The Visconti had acknowledged his independence by the peace of 1358, but they attacked him with overwhelming force two years afterwards; and Albornoz took advantage of the extremity to which he was reduced, to obtain from him the surrender of Bologna to the Holy See in exchange for a papal fief. A new war between the Visconti and the church was the consequence of this treaty: but the cardinal engaged the affections of the Bolognese in the contest by granting them a municipal government; he was served by the subjugated chieftains of Romagna with unusual fidelity; he excited a fresh league of the Lombard princes against the signors of Milan; and these puissant lords were, after various hostilities the issue of which was unfavorable to them, rejoiced to terminate the war by the cession of Bologna to the pope. The same treaty restored peace to Lombardy, and consummated the quiet subjugation of Romagna to the papal authority. * 1364

* Pope Urban V. on his arrival at Rome, three years after this, demanding of Albornoz an account of the money which he had expended during his conquest of the ecclesiastical states, the warlike cardinal sent him, as his reply, a whole wag-

CHAP. V. PART II.

Scandal of the papal residence at Avignon.

I have referred, in the beginning of this chapter, to the circumstances in the residence of the popes at Avignon which, more than their mere absence from the ancient capital of their see, conspired to estrange the minds of the Italians from their influence: their servile dependance upon the kings of France, the selection of subjects of those monarchs almost exclusively to fill the papal chair and the sacred college, and the shameful dissoluteness and profligacy of the papal court. The scandal of these corruptions in the church was felt not only in Italy but throughout Europe; and indignant Christendom pointed to Avignon as the Babylon of the west. Since clerical preferment was the reward of intrigues and bribery, that city was crowded with the most abandoned adventurers of France and Italy; and the manners of its court and its people were a faithful copy of the worst vices of these nations. The restoration of the papal throne to Rome was therefore the object of ardent wishes, to all who were alive to the honor of the church; and the feelings of the age in this respect may be gathered from other contemporary evidence, as well as from the celebrated letters of eloquent remonstrance and entreaty which Petrarch boldly addressed to the pontiffs and published to Europe. In Italy, indeed, the worldly ambition and pride,

gon load of the keys of the cities and fortresses which he had subjected. Sismondi, vol. vii. p. 19.; on the authority of a chronicle which has escaped my search, Pompeo Pellini, Storia di Perugia.

the public crimes and personal vices of successive popes, had for several hundred years been gradually working their pernicious effects upon the cause of religion; and before the energy of thought and acuteness of observation which distinguished the national mind in the fourteenth century, the disorders and impostures of the papacy were bared to contempt and derision. The enthusiastic spirit of devotion which had animated the Goths, the Lombards, the Franks, and the Normans, the blind submission which these northern barbarians paid to the priesthood, had been slowly and silently converted by their intellectual descendants, into insensibility and indifference to spiritual truths.

A residence at Avignon possessed many attractions for the papal court. To the pontiffs and the great majority of their cardinals, France was the native country; Avignon itself, after its purchase from Joanna of Naples as countess of Provence, had been decorated with their splendid palaces; and in its quiet streets their silken repose was neither interrupted by the tyranny of a Roman nobility, nor disturbed by the insurrections of a turbulent populace. It is therefore probable that, notwithstanding the discontent of Europe, Avignon would have retained the papal court permanently within its walls, if they could have continued to ensure to the pontiffs an inviolable sanctuary. But, as we have seen, Provence, after the north of France had been devastated by the English wars, became a prey to companies of

CHAP. V. PART II.

adventure, formed of the soldiery which the peace of Bretigni had disbanded. The wealth of Avignon was a tempting lure for these armies of plunderers; and on several occasions during the pontificate of Innocent VI., the luxurious prelates of his court were startled from their slumbers by the approach of danger. Sometimes the walls of Avignon were defended against the companies of adventure by the arms of the citizens, oftener was immunity from pillage purchased by the gold of the pope; and, on the death of Innocent in 1362, his successor Urban V., though also a Frenchman by birth, was disposed by the quick repetition of these alarms to listen, more earnestly than his predecessors had done, to the wishes of Christendom. At the moment of his election, he declared his resolution to re-establish the Holy See at Rome, and evinced his sincerity by the preparations which he made for the purpose.

Pope Urban V.

Restoration of the seat of the popedom to Rome. 1367

Some years, however, elapsed before Urban could carry his design into effect; but, at length, he departed from Avignon with his cardinals, who all followed him, however reluctantly, with the exception of five; and they refused to quit Provence. The intelligence of the pope's intention had every where been welcomed with delight; the gallies of Venice, Genoa, and Pisa, and of Joanna of Naples, escorted him in his voyage from the Rhone to the Tiber; and, on his landing in the papal states, the people of Rome, in the full and fresh feelings of joy and gratitude, or in weariness of the intestine disputes which as usual

agitated them, laid the offer of the signiory of their city at his feet. Urban sustained a heavy loss shortly after his arrival in Italy, in the death of Albornoz, but the cardinal left the ecclesiastical states to his master in the obedience to which he had reduced them.*

Alliance between the emperor Charles IV. and Urban V.

Urban V., some time before his arrival in Italy, had concerted measures with the emperor Charles IV., the ostensible object of which was the deliverance of the peninsula from the bands of foreign mercenaries who had inflicted so many evils upon her. But the real design of the pope was to humble the Visconti, the ancient enemies of the papacy, and that of Charles to repeat the extortions by which he had, in his former expedition, amassed so considerable a treasure. It was the last service which Albornoz rendered to the pope, to conclude for him an alliance with all the enemies of the Milanese lords. This league embraced the emperor, the king of Hungary, the queen of Naples, and the signors of Padua, Ferrara and Mantua. The power of the Visconti, notwithstanding the shifting vicissitudes of the perpetual wars in which their ambitious schemes had involved them, remained unshaken; the splendour of their house had been augmented by two matrimonial alliances with the royal lines of

League against the Visconti.

* Raynaldi, Annales Ecclesiast. 1350—1367. But I have collected most of the transactions in the subjugation of Romagna from Matteo Villani, and from Sismondi, who has himself followed the narrative of Matteo, or compared it with that of other chronicles.

CHAP. V. PART II.

England and France;* and the brothers prepared to repel or avert the assaults of their numerous foes with their accustomed activity and skill. Though they took Hawkwood with the English company into their pay, their forces were however very inferior to those of their enemies, when Charles IV. had entered Lombardy from Germany with a considerable army, and had been joined by the contingents of the Italian league. But Hawkwood arrested the advance of the imperialists and their confederates for some time in the Mantuan territory, by cutting the dikes of the Adige and inundating their camp; and meanwhile Bernabo

Arrival of Charles IV. in Italy. 1368

* Both these marriages were the work of Galeazzo Visconti, the vainest of the two brothers. In 1360 he purchased with 100,000 florins a daughter of France for his son Gian Galeazzo, a bargain numbered by contemporary French historians among the most humiliating expedients to which the distresses of the English wars had reduced their monarchy. As the Visconti, notwithstanding the original nobility of their family, possessed neither title nor legitimate right to the sovereignty of their states, they were still justly regarded in the eyes of Europe as usurpers and tyrants; and, that his daughter might at least wear a coronet, the French king created his son-in-law Gian Galeazzo, count of Vertus, a little fief in Champagne. The second royal alliance was concluded in 1368 between Lionel duke of Clarence, second son of Edward III. and the daughter of Galeazzo: certainly, as Mr. Hallam observes, not an inferior match; and for this, indeed, the Milanese lord paid 200,000 florins to Edward. But Lionel died in a few months from the effects of intemperance.

This marriage was celebrated with remarkable magnificence. We may notice as a circumstance illustrative of the prodigality of the times, the assertion of Sansovino, in his commentary on Boccaccio, that the bridegroom gave five hundred superb dresses to the minstrels, musicians, and buffoons, who attended on the occasion.

Visconti, who well knew the avarice of Charles, employed yet more effectual means for paralyzing the efforts of his enemies. By large presents he bribed the emperor to negociate a peace, and to send back the greater part of his army into Germany.

His disgraceful conduct in Lombardy,

Italy responded to the proclamation of this shameful treaty by one universal cry of surprise and indignation. Fifty thousand men had been assembled by the league for the deliverance of the peninsula from the machinations of the Visconti, and the ravages of the companies of adventure; and this great coalition had been frustrated solely by the rapacity of its chief. But Charles, indifferent to reproach so long as he added to his treasures, passed with undiminished assurance into Tuscany with the remaining body of his cavalry. He was invited into this province by his ruling passion. During the subjection of their city to Pisa, many of the Guelf exiles of Lucca had established themselves in France, and accumulated riches by commerce. To obtain the restoration of freedom for their birth-place, they offered Charles the full indulgence of his pecuniary desires; and he promised himself an exorbitant reward from their sacrifices to affectionate patriotism. The situation of Pisa favored his views. Giovanni Agnello, the new signor of that city, depended, for the continuance of an usurpation which was detested by the Pisans, upon the protection of the emperor; and Charles constituted him imperial vicar over Pisa, upon condition that Lucca should

CHAP. V. PART II.

be surrendered into his own hands. The very ceremony which was to publish the prostituted dignity of Agnello, proved fatal to his ambition. During his solemn installation as imperial vicar, which took place at Lucca where the emperor had established his residence, his leg was broken by the fall of the temporary gallery on which he stood; and the Pisans, while their tyrant was confined to his couch, rose in arms, restored their republic, and compelled him to abdicate the signiory.

And in Tuscany.

During his residence in Tuscany, Charles IV. played over again nearly the same part of rapacity and meanness, of treachery and impotence, which he had acted in his former visit. From Lucca he was imprudently invited by the people of Sienna, notwithstanding their experience of his character in his preceding expedition, to mediate between their contending factions; and he then, fomenting instead of allaying the troubles of the city, thought only of seizing the signiory that he might sell it to the pope. After some perfidious intrigues, he had personally repaired to Sienna and assembled within its walls nearly three thousand cuirassiers, partly his own forces, partly those of the pope. But the Siennese, awaking to a sense of their danger, did not hesitate to attack this imposing force in their streets; and so furious and desperate was their onset that, after a bloody combat of several hours, the whole of the imperial cavalry were dismounted or put to flight; above a thousand of them were slain or

grievously wounded; and the emperor, detected and baffled in his disgraceful schemes, and utterly defeated by the indignant citizens and abandoned by his followers, was compelled to surrender at discretion. The people used their victory with moderation: they only required that he should acknowledge their rights, quit their city, and trouble them no more; and they even paid him a contribution which he had the effrontery to demand, as soon as he regained his composure,* in compensation for the insults which the imperial dignity had sustained by their triumph. He was,

* A contemporary chronicler of Sienna, and apparently an eye-witness, gives a lively picture of the abject terror and ludicrous confusion of this contemptible and faithless monarch, at the moment when he surrendered himself to the citizens. "The emperor remained alone in the greatest fear that ever poor wretch had. The eyes of all the people were turned on him; he wept, he excused his conduct, he embraced every one who approached him. He protested that he had been betrayed by Malatesta, by the Salembini, the podestá and the twelve; he related the occasion and the nature of the offers which they had made to him. Francesco Bastali, whom he pointed out as having shared in this negociation, was arrested, and delivered over to the captain of the people; and search was likewise made for the other traitors. The emperor however treated with the signiory and people, and conferred upon the former the office of perpetual vicars of the empire over the town and its territory. He gave a general amnesty to the people, and accorded many more favors than were demanded of him. Trembling as he was, and famished to death, he seemed to have lost his head: he wished to depart from the place but he could not, for he was left without money, or horses, or attendants. With some difficulty the captain of the people recovered for him a part of what he had lost." Neri di Donato, Cronica Sanese, p. 206. (In the fifteenth volume of Script. Rer. Ital.)

CHAP. V. PART II.

in truth, neither abashed by his disgrace, nor prevented by it from the continued pursuit of his design to extort money from all the Tuscan cities. Against Florence he revived some obsolete claims of the empire; he attempted, in concert with the defeated partizans of Agnello, to possess himself of Pisa; and, when his gens-d'armerie had been disgracefully repulsed in this enterprise, he employed them in insulting the Florentine and Pisan territories. By these vexations and hostilities he gained his object: the two republics, who would have better consulted their dignity by an appeal to arms, preferred to rid themselves peaceably of his pretensions and assaults by money; and he obtained 50,000 florins from each as the price of his leaving them undisturbed.

His sale of freedom to Lucca.

The conduct of Charles IV. in Tuscany had put the finishing stroke to the degradation of the imperial authority; but, amidst the general contempt and obloquy which he provoked, he found means to leave, in one city at least, the memory of benefits alone. Yet the only action which he performed that might have been truly glorious if it had been disinterested, was converted by the stain of his characteristic avarice into a transaction of mere mercenary traffic. He resolved before he quitted Tuscany to restore freedom to Lucca: but he determined also to drain the last florin from her citizens for the ransom of their independence. During fifty-six years of servitude —from the usurpation of Uguccione della Faggiuola, throughout the tyranny of Castruccio

Castracani and the Pisans, and to the surrender of her government to Charles IV. by Agnello—Lucca had lost her population, her manufactures, her riches, and great part of her territory; but her citizens had still inherited the passion of their fathers for freedom, and cherished the ardent hope of its revival. For this they had sighed in their homes, or destined the fruits of their industry in exile; for this those of the number who had amassed wealth in foreign lands were ready to sacrifice their blood and their treasure. Notwithstanding the extravagant price which the sordid emperor set upon the deliverance of their country, they cheerfully yielded to his extortions; and accompanied an enormous payment of 300,000 florins of gold, with a sincerity of joy and unmerited gratitude, that might have overwhelmed him with shame, if to shame he had ever been accessible. He quitted Tuscany and returned into 1369
Germany before they could raise the whole of the stipulated amount: but they at length completed it by loans from the Florentines and others of their allies; the imperial lieutenant to whom they had been consigned in pledge then surrendered the keys of the city to their magistrates; and the Revival of that republic. republic of Lucca once more revived. As their ancient laws had fallen into oblivion, the citizens 1370
modeled their constitution after that of Florence; they instituted an annual festival to celebrate the recovery of their independence and to commemorate their obligations to Charles IV.; and they decreed that, as long as the freedom of Lucca

CHAP. V. PART II.

should endure, their coin should be impressed with the effigy of that monarch. *

Grandeur of Urban V.

If Urban V., in restoring the seat of the Holy See to Rome, had designed to elevate the pride and the power of the church, he had no reason to regret his resolution. The papal states were tranquil under his sway; he enjoyed the affection of Italy; and the two emperors of the east and west had repaired to Rome to prostrate themselves before his throne. John Palæologus, whose empire was crumbling before the might of the sultan Amurath, quitted Constantinople to throw himself at the feet of the Roman pontiff, and to pour out those solicitations for the aid of western Europe which were ineffectually repeated by his successors until the fall of the Greek monarchy; and Charles IV., who had deservedly incurred the displeasure of Urban by his desertion of the league against the Visconti, reconciled himself with the church; during a short visit which he made to Rome, by every abject humiliation. But Charles had no sooner returned into Germany, than Urban found his repose endangered by the insolence of the Milanese lords, whose pride had risen with the dissolution of the Italian league. They stirred up another war in the peninsula by encouraging the revolt of the little town of San Miniato against

New wars provoked by the Visconti.

* Muratori, A.D. 1368—70. But, for this expedition of Charles IV. into Italy, I have principally followed the spirited narrative of Sismondi, c. 48. who has had the advantage of consulting a valuable MS. in the archives of Lucca. Beverini, Annales Lucenses.

the Florentines; and Urban, who saw in the Visconti the perpetual disturbers of Italy, availed himself of the indignation of Florence to form a new league against them, of which he placed himself at the head. * Several of the Lombard princes, and the republics of Pisa and Lucca joined the confederacy; but it produced little effect. Hawkwood, still the general of Bernabo Visconti, in-

* The pope's declaration of war was conveyed to Bernabo Visconti by two legates, in the shape of a bull of excommunication. Bernabo received it with apparent composure, and himself honored the legates by escorting them through Milan, as far as one of the bridges of that city. When they reached this spot, he suddenly stopt, and, turning to them, desired them to take their choice whether they would eat or drink before they quitted him. The legates were mute with surprise at this abrupt address. "Be assured," continued the tyrant with tremendous oaths, "that we do not separate before you have eaten or drunk in such manner, as that you shall have cause to remember me." The legates cast their eyes around them; they saw themselves encompassed by the guards of the tyrant and a hostile multitude, and observed the river beneath them; and one of them at length answered that "he would rather eat, than ask for drink where there was so much water." "Good," returned Bernabo, "here then are the bulls of excommunication which you have brought me; and I swear unto you that you shall not quit this bridge before you have eaten in my presence the parchment on which they are written, the leaden seals attached to them, and the silken strings by which these hang." It was in vain that the legates earnestly protested against this outrage, in their double capacity of ambassadors and priests. They were obliged to make the strange trial of their digestion before the tyrant and the assembled concourse. Sismondi, vol. vii. p. 57. He has copied this curious story, which has often been told, and is at least quite in keeping with the character of Bernabo, from a Paduan chronicle in the seventeenth volume of Script. Rer. Ital.

CHAP. V. PART II.

flicted a signal defeat upon the Florentine army at Cascina in Tuscany, and made a bold but unsuccessful attempt to carry Pisa by surprise in conjunction with the deposed doge Agnello; and although the army which he commanded, as well as the forces of the Visconti in Lombardy, were afterwards obliged to retire before the troops of the confederacy, the war languished in indecision. Amidst these troubles, the pope sighed for the repose of Avignon, and at length quitted Italy to return to that city. But he had scarcely arrived in Provence, when he breathed his last; and the intelligence of his death induced the league to conclude a peace with the Milanese lords.

Return of the pope to Avignon. His death.

1370

The restless perfidy of the Visconti as usual prevented the continuance of this pacification; and soon after the election of the new pope Gregory XI. at Avignon, their attacks upon the allies of the church in Lombardy produced a fresh war. In this, however, Florence, and the Tuscan republics who were now decidedly led by her counsels, took no share; and the Visconti were successful at all points against the papal and Lombard confederates: until they imprudently discharged Hawkwood and his company, who passed into the service of the church, surprised the Milanese army, and changed the fortune of the contest. After this the affairs of the Visconti continued to decline; a pestilence and famine ravaged Lombardy; and a truce was produced by the general exhaustion of the combatants.

1374

War between Florence and the church.

It was during this brief interval of repose, that a new turn was given to affairs by the treachery of the papal legate who commanded for Gregory in Italy. While Florence was oppressed by the pestilence and dearth, which prevailed in Tuscany as well as the Lombard states, the crafty and unprincipled churchman imagined that, by increasing the distress of the city, he might excite its populace to revolt against the signiory, and reduce the enfeebled republic under the papal yoke. He therefore, pretending to discharge Hawkwood and his company from his pay, secretly ordered that adventurer to enter Tuscany and burn the Florentine harvests to aggravate the famine. The ingratitude of the legate towards their state, which had ever been the faithful ally of the church, filled the people of Florence with the deepest indignation; and though their Guelf prejudices, unconnected indeed as these were with any superstitious feeling, at first revolted at the project of entering into a war against the ancient chief of their national faction, the bitter sense of unmerited injury finally prevailed in their councils. To render their operations more vigorous, they confided all the executive power of the republic to a new magistracy of eight, who were termed the signors of the war. These commissioners formed a league with the republics of Sienna, Lucca, Arezzo, and Pisa, to attack the legate: they resolved to rouze all Romagna to the assertion of freedom against the tyranny of French ecclesiastics; and, in the depth

1375

CHAP. V. PART II.

of their resentment against the church, they even entered into an alliance with Bernabo Visconti, a tyrant with whom they had hitherto shunned all connection as the natural enemy of their free commonwealth. But, though they well knew his perfidious character, they were also aware of his hostility to the Roman See, and they trusted to the bond of self-interest which they imagined would unite their cause with his own.

Revolt of Romagna.

The vigour with which the talents of the new signors of the war inspired the Florentine league had the most disastrous consequences for the papal power. The sway of the French legates, who were set over Romagna by the court of Avignon, was universally odious; and when the Florentines displayed their standards in that province, with the simple and emphatic motto of 'LIBERTY' emblazoned on them in letters of gold, every city and castle hailed the invitation. It was to no purpose that Hawkwood with execrable cruelty endeavoured to strike terror into the disaffected by a diabolical massacre at Forli, the inhabitants of which he suspected of the intention to revolt: the insurrection spread in every direction, and, in less than twelve months, in all the ecclesiastical states Rimini and its castles were
1376 the only places which had not hoisted the banner of freedom. Gregory XI., in consternation at this train of reverses, had first recourse to spiritual arms; but he vainly endeavoured to alarm the consciences of the Florentines by striking their city with an interdict and their rulers with ex-

communication; and he then redoubled his efforts in the field. Taking into his service the company of the Bretons, the last and most ferocious of the bands formed after the English wars, which still remained in France, he dispatched two new cardinals into Italy with these reinforcements. They numbered two thousand lances, or six thousand cuirassiers, with four thousand foot; and their appearance in Lombardy induced the Visconti to desert the Florentine league and make their separate peace. [o] The war was then carried into Romagna with frightful inhumanity: wherever the Bretons entered by assault they spared not even children at the breast; and these and similar atrocities during the whole war were instigated by men, who wore the garb of religion, and styled themselves the servants of the Almighty. One of the papal legates, the cardinal of Geneva, afterwards anti-pope under the title of Clement VII., personally encouraged and directed a massacre at Cesena, which had surrendered to him upon the solemn faith of a capitulation. Five thousand souls, men, women, and children, perished in this butchery; in which the Bretons seized infants by the feet and dashed out their brains against the stones.

These inhuman tragedies filled the Florentines and their allies with more indignation than fear. They gained over Hawkwood into their service on the expiration of his engagement with the pope; and they prosecuted the war with unabated

CHAP. V. PART II.

resolution and activity. Meanwhile, circumstances had convinced Gregory XI. that his presence in Italy could alone avert the total ruin of the papal affairs. He therefore had quitted Avignon, and arrived at Rome; from whence he directed his endeavours to effect a pacification with the confederates. He was first successful in detaching Bologna from the league; but solely upon condition that this city, which had shared in the general revolt of Romagna, should continue to govern itself as a republic under the nominal supremacy of a papal vicar. The Tuscan republics were then induced by this and other desertions to open negociations for peace; but while they were treating under the guidance of Florence, the conferences were suddenly suspended by the death of the pope; and the extraordinary events which arose in the church changed all the relations of the popedom with the Italian powers. *

Arrival of pope Gregory XI. at Rome. 1377

His death. 1378

* Poggio Bracciolini, Istor. Fiorent. b. i. p. 201. ad fin. and ii. ad p. 240. Sismondi, c. 49.

We now begin, for these Florentine wars, first with the Visconti and afterwards with the church, to require the aid of this history of Florence by Poggio Bracciolini; which, opening with the year 1350, opportunely supplies the loss of the Villani, and continues to increase in value, until it reaches the author's own times, and terminates with the year 1455, only a short period before his death. In some respects M. Sismondi appears to me to have rather underrated the work of this learned and celebrated man, who was unquestionably one of the lights of his age; and who, as chancellor of the Florentine republic, had all the archives of the state open to him when he composed his history. It is however incomplete, as being a fragment which never received the last polish from his elegant mind.

Election of a new pope.

At the period of Gregory's death, the sacred college was composed of twenty-three cardinals; but of these seven were absent: six had remained at Avignon when the late pope quitted that city, and the seventh was legate in Tuscany. Sixteen cardinals therefore entered the conclave at Rome in the usual manner to give a successor to Gregory XI.; and, of these, one was a Spaniard, eleven were French, and only four Italians. Above two-thirds of the electoral body were thus foreigners; their dislike of an Italian residence was well known; and the people of Rome might justly apprehend their choice of another French pontiff, a fresh secession to Avignon, and a long renewal of the disorders and calamities which the absence of the popes had entailed upon their city. The dread of these consequences filled the capital with ferment and uproar. Since the death of Rienzi, Rome had relapsed into her former state of distraction; and we find her successively oppressed by the tyrannical nobility, governed by an obscure demagogue, and eager to surrender her freedom to the popes on their appearance within her walls. But, at the period before us, she was ruled by a republican signiory of thirteen *bannerets*;* and these magistrates

* These magistrates were the elected representatives of the thirteen quarters of the city, of which they bore the respective banners; and hence their name. The exact year in which this form of administration was established at Rome has been disputed; and I cannot determine whether

CHAP. V. PART II.

sent a deputation from their body to demand an audience of the assembled cardinals, and to echo the public voice of the city, which had been already declared with alarming earnestness. The sacred college answered to these envoys, by the mouth of their dean or president, that they were astonished at the presumption of the Roman magistracy in attempting to influence an election which must be determined neither by respect nor fear, by favor nor popular clamour, but by the suggestions of the Holy Spirit.

Violence of the Roman populace.

The bannerets withdrew little satisfied with this reply; and the discontent of the populace burst forth with redoubled violence. They had previously broken into the Vatican, as the cardinals were entering the conclave, to proclaim their wishes; the palace had been with difficulty cleared of the intruders; and the mob now assembled round it in immense numbers, and demanded with appalling menaces a Roman or at least an Italian pope. Amidst this storm of popular tumult, the conclave proceeded with the election; and finally, with only one dissentient voice, gave their suffrages in favor of the archbishop of Bari, a Neapolitan, and not a member of the sacred college. This choice satisfied the citizens, and, in a few days, tranquillity having been restored, the new pope was crowned with

Urban VI. chosen by the conclave.

bannerets were first created very shortly after Rienzi's death, or only in 1375; but of this I am at least sure—that the question is utterly unimportant.

the usual ceremonies, in which all the members of the late conclave took their share. For several weeks the cardinals voluntarily continued their obedience to him; they announced him to their absent brethren at Avignon as the object of their choice; and all the acknowledgements that were customary on the accession of a pontiff were freely rendered to Urban VI. by the sacred college, the citizens of the capital, and the people generally, where the intelligence of his undisputed election had penetrated.

His offensive conduct to the cardinals.

But the quiet possession of the chair of St. Peter, which had thus been given to Urban, was soon shaken by his own violent and arbitrary temper. He had been indebted for his elevation to the character which he had acquired for learning and piety; but the event proved that the cardinals could with difficulty have made a more unfortunate election; and they shortly found that they had given themselves not merely a master, but a capricious and passionate tyrant. He filled them with disgust and alarm by the want of moderation and prudence with which he declared his intention of reforming their manners;* he

* He threatened the cardinals with excommunication if they persisted in receiving simoniacal presents; he accused one of them of having stolen the money of the church; he told a second he was a fool; he rudely imposed silence on others in the consistory; and he restricted them from having more than one dish at their tables. Though he here set them the example, this was perhaps the unkindest cut of all: especially to the French cardinals, who are often reproached by Petrarch with their love of good cheer, and whose devotion to the wines of Burgundy is maliciously in-

CHAP. V. PART II.

loaded them with opprobrious language and personal insults; and he united the whole French party against him by publicly announcing his resolution to confine his residence to Italy, and to make so numerous a creation of Italian cardinals, that foreigners should no longer possess a majority in the sacred college.

Their secession.

The consequences of this offensive conduct of Urban were displayed as soon as the cardinals, obtaining permission one after another to retire from Rome, under pretence of establishing themselves in the summer residence, which had been appointed for them in the neighbouring town of Agnani, had assembled at that place, while the pope still remained in the capital. Here they had leisure to interchange the expression of their general discontent, and to concert their schemes of common vengeance. Their resolution was hastened by an unreasonable order which Urban sent to them to join him at Tivoli, where he now determined to pass the summer, notwithstanding the expence of their preparations at Agnani. They refused obedience; the cardinal of Geneva summoned to their protection the company of the Bretons which he had led into Italy; and, retiring to Fondi, they there solemnly annulled the election of Urban, upon the plea that the menaces of the Roman populace had compelled it. Declaring the chair of St. Peter still vacant, they then en-

They annul the election of Urban VI.,

sisted upon by Gibbon as the principal cause of their attachment to Avignon. I cannot quarrel with their taste, whatever objections I might raise to their morals.

tered anew into conclave, and chose for the legitimate pope the cardinal of Geneva, who assumed the title of Clement VII. In these proceedings the few Italian cardinals took no part; but neither did they any longer acknowledge the authority of Urban. Divided between their hatred of him, and their reluctance to assent to measures which might again transport the seat of the popedom beyond the Alps, they observed a neutrality and withdrew from the theatre of contest. But as the foreign prelates had composed above two-thirds of the conclave, they formed, without the Italians, the majority on which the legitimacy of Urban's pretensions must rest, and maintained their right to annul a nomination which they ascribed to violence.

and substitute Clement VII.

The validity of the election of Urban VI. is a question which has scarcely to this day received the formal decision of the Romish church; nor is it one to deserve *our* serious attention. I may, however, remark that it has been much agitated. On the one hand, it has been asserted that all the probabilities are against the voluntary choice of an Italian by the great majority of French cardinals, who ardently desired a return to Avignon; nor can it be denied in addition to this inference, that a considerable degree of intimidation was produced in the conclave by the threats of the Roman populace; since the cardinals had every reason to dread that their lives would be sacrificed to the fury of the mob, if they elected a trans-

Question on the validity of Urban's title.

CHAP. V. PART II.

alpine subject. But there is evidence, on the other side, that the French party was itself divided into two provincial factions, each of which courted the suffrages of the few Italians in the college; and, of one of these factions, Urban had been the creature. It is, moreover, certain that for several weeks after the election, during which the sacred college were freed from restraint, no attempt was made to invalidate the legitimacy of the pope, or to enter a protest against the compulsory violence which the conclave had suffered; and that, on the contrary, when the cardinals might with safety have withdrawn their allegiance from Urban, they announced their choice of him to their absent colleagues, and continued to obey him, as all former pontiffs had been obeyed, until his own conduct provoked their resistance. We may therefore at least conclude with very little doubt that, if that pontiff had not outraged the pride and selfishness of his constituents, their protest would never have disturbed the tranquillity of the church. This is the sole point of interest to determine; and I shall only add that the church of Rome has given a tacit preference to the cause of Urban by numbering that pope and the successors of his party in the roll of ordinal legitimacy, while it excludes the memory of their adversaries from the same honors.

The Great Schism of the West.

The mere merits of the contest between two parties which equally deserve our contempt are

almost beneath inquiry: the fruits of their quarrel are of another character. These were no less than the division of the religious obedience of Europe for above forty years: the Great Schism of the West. France and Spain, with the queen of Naples, espoused the cause of the French cardinals; and acknowledged Clement VII.; Italy gladly adhered to an Italian pope, and England, Germany, Hungary, and Portugal likewise sided with Urban VI. But between two men, neither of whom were personally calculated to inspire the Christian world with respect, the pontifical authority dwindled into a shadow. Joanna of Naples was the only sovereign who took an immediate part in the struggle between the rival pontiffs: Clement retired first to her capital and subsequently to Avignon, where a papal court was once more established; Urban, who created nineteen new cardinals all of them Italians, remained at Rome. In tracing the isolated revolutions of Naples, at the close of this chapter, we shall have occasion to refer to his subsequent conduct; but over the rest of Italy his authority was too little felt to influence the general affairs of the peninsula; and I need only state that, immediately after his accession, he hastened to reconcile the church with Florence and her allies, and to conclude the pacification which his predecessor had meditated. The conditions were more favorable to the republic than those proposed by Gregory XI.; but she strangely consented, notwithstanding her victories, to atone for the scandal of her

CHAP. V. PART II.

just resentment at ecclesiastical perfidy, by pecuniary sacrifices.

Domestic affairs of Florence. 1343—1382.

After the expulsion of the duke of Athens from Florence in 1343, the internal tranquillity of that republic had been, for above fifteen years, undisturbed by a single ebullition of discontent; and twenty years more had passed without any very serious interruption to the repose of the city. Periods of national happiness are usually least fertile in incident; and the domestic annals of Florence, during the first of these epochs, have failed in attracting our attention, merely because they are unstained by crime and unchequered by calamity. But the same year which produced the Great Schism of the West is memorable in Florentine history, for a series of troubles and popular commotions which fearfully endangered the existence of freedom, and shook the agitated state to its centre. The origin of these disorders must be sought in the new character, gradually given to the constitution of the republic by some political transactions during the last twenty years; which were themselves no more than the fruits of a contest between two powerful and adverse families. These were the Ricci and the Albizzi, both of the order of popolani grandi, the great commoners, or plebeian aristocracy, which had

Factions of the Ricci and Albizzi.

* Raynaldi, Ann. Eccles. ad ann. 1378. But the particulars of the election and proceedings of Urban VI. are carefully collected by Sismondi, c. 50; and the arguments on the validity of his title skilfully glanced at by Gibbon, c. 70, and accurately weighed in the luminous abridgement of Hallam, vol. ii. Chapter on Eccles. Hist. p. 342.

risen to power on the ruins of the old nobility. Some accidental and private cause of offence between these wealthy and arrogant houses had rankled into deadly animosity; they had found a ready theatre of rivalry in the political arena; and, in the year 1357, one of them, to work the ruin of the other, set an engine in motion, the tremendous powers of which had existed in the state for nearly a century, without being fully manifested or dangerously wielded in action.

The Guelf corporation.

In describing the settlement of the Florentine constitution, I have noticed the establishment of a powerful corporation within the republic to prosecute suspected Ghibelins, and guard the general interests of the national faction; and I have stated that this Guelf society was endowed, for such purposes, with a part of the confiscated property of the Ghibelins, and provided with a regular executive magistracy and councils of its own. But Ghibelinism had been so completely crushed in Florence by proscription and exile, that there remained little call for the exertions of the Guelf society; and that body plays no conspicuous part in the guidance of the state, until after the fall of the duke of Athens. The signal triumph which democratical principles had gained by that revolution appears to have produced the first symptoms of jealousy from the Guelf society; from the offices of which the old nobility had by a curious anomaly never been excluded, as they were from all other situations of public trust. Besides the democratical influence of the species

CHAP. V. PART II.

of lottery which regulated the succession of government at Florence, a specific law, called the *divieto*, had the effect of increasing the preponderance of the lower citizens in the direction of affairs. This statute provided that two individuals of the same name should not hold office together; and thus its exclusive tendency militated solely against the more ancient and respectable houses, whose members were extremely numerous, pretty much according to the duration of their wealth and prosperity; while new and obscure families scarcely knew their relatives, and seldom bore a common sirname. The operation of the divieto, too, was the more destructive to the power of the great commoners, as all above one member of a family whose names were drawn at the same renewal of magistracies, lost their turn wholly, until the bags were replenished at the biennial ballot.

The Guelf society, in which the old nobility and the popolani grandi enjoyed a paramount influence, were naturally adverse to the democratical spirit of the divieto, and of the lottery itself, by which persons of low condition, and sometimes of Ghibelin origin, came into office. The cause of Ghibelinism, as it was that of the perfidious tyrants of Lombardy, and of their partizans generally throughout the peninsula, was hostile to freedom: while the Guelf states, and Florence especially, were the champions of Italian liberty. It was therefore easy for the Guelf society to sound the alarm in the republic, that Ghibelinism

was raising its head; and, in 1347, they obtained the enactment of a law, by which every person whose family had been Ghibelin since the commencement of the century, or who was not himself of unsuspected Guelf principles, was pronounced ineligible for offices of trust. They, in this way, obtained their real object, that of in some measure counteracting the effect of the divieto, by depriving a part of the democracy in turn of a share in the government, by the exclusion of those citizens who could not establish their Guelf origin.

The law of 1347 does not appear, however, to have been very vigorously put in force during the succeeding ten years; and the power of the Guelf society yet remained in abeyance, when it was converted, in 1357, by the ambitious feuds of the Albizzi and Ricci, first into an instrument of mutual oppression, and afterwards of universal tyranny over the state. The Albizzi were reputed descendants of a Ghibelin family of Arezzo; and Uguccione de' Ricci, the chief of the rival house, had sufficient influence, notwithstanding considerable opposition, to carry a law against Ghibelinism, which was aimed at the Albizzi, and revived and strengthened the earlier enactment.* It was now decreed that any reputed Ghibelin who accepted office should be punished, at the pleasure of the executive magistrate, with fine, or imprisonment, or even loss of life. The iniquity

* M. Sismondi seems to have altogether overlooked the original law of 1347. See Giovanni Villani, b. xii. c. 79.

CHAP. V. PART II.

of this ordinance was the greater, as no better evidence was required for condemnation than common fame attested by six witnesses; the captains of the Guelf party were themselves entrusted with the judicial cognizance of such accusations; and a citizen once convicted before them became ever after incapable of exercising magistracy. But the application of the law was widely different from that contemplated by its mover. The Albizzi and their friends, far from themselves suffering its penalties, succeeded, by the intimate alliance which they formed with the old nobility, in engrossing the direction of the Guelf corporation; and these powerful commoners, so connected with the ancient aristocracy, began to exercise an alarming tyranny over the partizans of their enemies, although they did not venture to attack the Ricci themselves.

Though the moderate Guelfs were displeased with the rigour of the new law, they could only effect some modification of it, by which the captains of the corporation were directed to warn or admonish (ammonire) suspected Ghibelins beforehand against accepting office, instead of awaiting their appointment and then inflicting punishment. But this expedient for preventing condemnation only anticipated its injustice, and enlarged the tyrannical functions of the corporation. No individual dared to resist so formidable an oligarchy, for, if he disregarded their admonition, he was at once treated as a convicted Ghibelin. In this manner above two hundred of the enemies of the

Albizzi were at different times excluded from political rights. But the Ricci, by intrigue subsequently acquired in their turn a similar influence over the captains of the Guelf society, and gave a counter direction to the system of exclusion; and, thus, as the rival houses alternately prevailed in the corporation, the whole power of the state passed by intimidation or violence into the hands of an oligarchy of great families.

Tyranny of that oligarchy.

The tyranny of this Guelf party soon became odious at Florence. For the kind of proscription which they exercised, under the pretext of crushing Ghibelinism, was in fact carried on only against individuals who were obnoxious to themselves. Their admonitions were constantly addressed to persons whose connections and principles were thoroughly Guelf; but the loss of political rights was not the less dependant upon the mere arbitrary pleasure of the leaders of the corporation. The numbers of persons who were unjustly deprived of the privileges of citizenship continually increased, and composed a regular body of malcontents. But these ammoniti (the admonished) were not equal, numerous as they were, to a contest with the Guelf oligarchy, who carried on their attacks under the shield of law, and counted on their side the superior discipline of secresy and union, and the sanction of the authority which their party had arrogated in the state.

The abortive conspiracy which was detected in 1360, was formed by the ammoniti, and embraced

CHAP. V. PART II.

many men of distinguished name, who, in their indignation against the authors of an oppressive proscription, were not deterred from endangering the general liberty of Florence by summoning foreign aid for their vengeance. Some of the leaders of this plot were put to death, but the forbearance which the ruling faction displayed towards others who were less prominent, in a great degree reconciled all parties to their sway. The ability, courage, and virtuous policy, with which the Guelf oligarchy meanwhile directed the foreign affairs of the republic, doubtless had the same tendency, and almost redeemed the injustice of their domestic administration. The dignity of the state had never been so honorably sustained, as during the period when their party were the real governors of Florence. The repulse of the Great Company, the moderation and wisdom which preceded, and the vigour which conducted the war with Pisa, were all brilliant proofs of their sound judgment and political talents; and it was under their skilful guidance that the counsels of Florence acquired a tacit supremacy over the other republics of Tuscany.

For above ten years after the detection of the conspiracy of the ammoniti, we hear of little opposition to the sway of the oligarchy: but, in 1371, the open enmity between the Albizzi and Ricci and their respective adherents had reached its height; and the proceedings to which the rival houses by turns instigated the Guelf society, as they prevailed in its councils, rouzed the gene-

ral indignation of the people and kept the city in a ferment. The existing signiory of the state chanced to be neutral between these great families, and obtained a law which, to prevent them from disturbing the tranquillity of the republic, equally excluded the members of both from magistracy for five years. This measure was successful for a time in checking the rival ambition of these great commoners; and the Guelf corporation itself soon afterwards declined in influence, when the republic was provoked into her war with the church by the perfidy of the papal legate. The leaders of that society could not stem the torrent of popular fury against the ingratitude of the church: but they were averse from a rupture with the pope, in which it seemed a contradiction and a sacrifice of consistency for Guelfs to engage; and thus the direction of affairs fell into other hands. The eight commissioners of the war were all of the party opposed to the corporation; the success of their government was viewed with extreme jealousy by that body; and two regular and powerful factions were thus created in the administration of the republic and of the Guelf society. The Albizzi, with the old nobility and the majority of the popolani grandi, constituted the Guelf oligarchy or aristocratic party, whose original object it had been to keep the lower citizens out of office: the faction of the Ricci, with the great commoners in their interest, identified themselves with the democracy, ostensibly from indignation at the exclusive policy of

The Albizzi, chiefs of the Guelf aristocracy.

The Ricci, leaders of the democratical party.

the oligarchy, but in reality from the spirit of selfish ambition. The former chief of the Ricci, Uguccione, was dead; but, besides this family, the Alberti, the Medici, and other distinguished plebeian nobles, ranged themselves with the lower people; and Giorgio Scali and Tomaso Strozzi succeeded Uguccione de' Ricci as leaders of the party.

The close of the war against the church appeared to the Guelf oligarchy a favorable occasion for recovering the authority, of which they had been deprived by a contest so much at variance with the ancient prejudices of their faction. They therefore began, even before the peace with Urban VI. was signed, to renew their admonitions, and, in a few months, excluded eighty citizens from office. Thus, as Sismondi observes, they made it an unpardonable offence against individuals that their ancestors, a century or two back, had borne arms against the church, in opposition to which both they themselves and their republic were at the moment arrayed in open hostility. These arbitrary measures determined the democratical faction by one vigorous effort to break the chains which the Guelf corporation were bent upon forging anew for their fellow citizens; and they were certainly justified by every principle of liberty, and seconded by the general voice of the people, in their resolution to resist the reviving oppression of so ambitious an oligarchy.

In studying the domestic history of free states, we shall seldom be safe in surrendering our entire

approbation to the motives and conduct of any party or confederated order of men; and, in the fierce contention of factions which perpetually agitated the Italian republics, we should be especially liable to error if, in pursuit of any imaginary consistency of opinion, we suffered our partialities to be thrown into either scale. In the memorable struggle which arose in the Florentine republic on the occasion before us, it has been sometimes the fashion to represent the democratical party as the virtuous champions of freedom, because their opponents may justly be stigmatized with the reproach of labouring to establish an oligarchical tyranny. Yet it was rather the accident of rivalry among the great commoners, than any real superiority in the purity of their designs, which ranged the Ricci and their friends with the lower people, in opposition to the Albizzi and the Guelf corporation. The ambitious quarrel of these factions was, in truth, only for power; and there are many circumstances in the proceedings of the democratical leaders, that will forbid us from attributing to them the integrity of purpose, which can alone ennoble the conflict for political rights. Yet, however we may question their designs, the cause which they espoused was at least the better one; and the projects of the Guelf oligarchy had merited the alarm and suspicion which they excited, when Salvestro de' Medici, a man of intrepid character, whose Guelf descent and principles were too generally known to afford the oligarchy a pretence for excluding him from

CHAP. V. PART II.

office, became gonfalonier of justice by the usual process of the lottery.

In concert with Tomaso Strozzi, Giorgio Scali, and Benedetto Alberti, the new magistrate determined, by virtue of his official functions, to propose a law which should revive the ordinances of justice against the nobility, restrict the authority of the captains of the Guelf corporation, and revise the admonitions which they had issued. His propositions were violently opposed in the signorial college, in which every law necessarily originated, by the Guelf interest; and he then boldly appealed to the assembled council of the people. This action was the signal for all the insurrectionary movements which followed: his address produced a tumultuary effect in the council; Benedetto Alberti rouzed the citizens, collected without, to arms by the watchword of "*Popolo!*" "For the people;" and, in that moment, the oligarchy, so long the terror of their opponents, wavered before the declaration of the popular will. They yielded to the motion of Salvestro, and his propositions were riotously carried into a law.

Insurrection of the democratical faction.

1378

With this concession the people appeared at first satisfied; and tranquillity was for the moment restored. But the popular ferment was far from being in reality allayed; the shops and private houses of Florence were closed and barricaded; and every thing announced that an alarming crisis was at hand. Of the twenty-one trading arts, which contained at once the mercantile and

political divisions of the city, the seven greater and more wealthy, in which the popolani grandi were enrolled, were generally attached to the Guelf oligarchy; the fourteen lesser, formed of the mechanics and retail traders, naturally belonged, on the contrary, to the democratical party; and, between these two descriptions of citizens, lay all the jealousy and furious animosity of party spirit. The lesser arts were resolved to render the republic a pure democracy: in the course of the few days which succeeded the passing of the law of Salvestro de' Medici, they repeatedly assembled in arms under their respective banners; they compelled the signiory to summon a general committee of the magistracy to reform the republic; and they attacked and destroyed the houses of the Guelf leaders, and obliged many of those chiefs to fly from the city. The signiory attempted at first to soothe the insurgents by temporizing measures; but the passions of the multitude had been too violently excited to leave them contented with any thing short of a full assent to their demands. At the instigation of the ammoniti, they required that this proscribed class should be immediately restored to their complete rights; that the authority of the Guelf corporation should be limited and its magistracy taken out of the hands of the faction which had engrossed it; and that several of the most obnoxious of that oligarchy should be outlawed. All these conditions were submitted to, and order seemed at length re-established in the city.

Fall of the Guelf aristocracy.

CHAP. V. PART II.

Sedition of the ciompi.

But the success with which the lesser arts had dictated laws to the republic, was a dangerous example to the numerous classes of the population of Florence who were yet lower in the scale of society. There were several kinds of artizans in the city, who were not included in the organization of the arts, and were consequently deprived of political privileges. These workmen were held in dependance by the different arts for which they laboured: as, for example, the woollen manufactures, which were estimated to employ thirty thousand persons, were placed under the government of the great art of the drapers; and in this manner the carders of wool, the dyers, weavers, and similar craftsmen, instead of forming corporations in themselves, were all subject to the tribunals of their employers, against whose oppression they, perhaps justly, complained that they could when aggrieved obtain no redress. They were, therefore, full of discontent, and resolved to imitate the conduct of the lesser arts, who had gained by insurrection whatever they desired. A secret and fearful conspiracy spread among them; and embraced also the lowest dregs of the populace, the *ciompi*,* as they were called, who had been set in action by the intrigues of

* A corruption of the French *compéres*, comrades, which had been introduced into Florence by the soldiers of the duke of Athens. They used the word in familiar address to their boon companions, who were chosen among the low populace; and it thus became the cant term for the rabble, who worked without regular trades for daily hire.

Salvestro de' Medici and other demagogues in the late troubles, and had already whetted their appetite for pillage.

Florence in the hands of a mob.

Though the signiory discovered the existence of a combination among the lower populace, on the evening before the meditated rising, the whole of the more respectable citizens of Florence seemed with one accord to abandon the line of their duty and of the public safety at this momentous crisis. The government, as the republic was at peace, had only a few score of cuirassiers in pay; the gonfaloniers of companies with their militia, instead of obeying the summons of the priors to assemble around the palace of the signiory, thought only of remaining in their several quarters to guard their own property from pillage; and thus, by the cowardice, or lethargy, or connivance of the incorporated citizens,* the dregs of the populace were suffered to gather in arms, and to grow in audacity by the impunity which they enjoyed. The flame of insurrection spread with frightful rapidity; the mob became terrible by their immense numbers and the blind fury which animated them; and the whole city was delivered up at their will to fire and pillage. The houses

* The tame submission of a large and flourishing city like Florence, with an organized municipal militia, to the excesses of a rabble composed only of the dregs of her population, might excite more of our surprise, if our own history, within the last fifty years, did not teach us how easily the imbecility and cowardice of a few men may deliver a great capital over to fire and pillage. The ciompi were at least as formidable a mob as the London rioters of 1780.

CHAP. V. PART II.

of all the better citizens who were obnoxious to them were reduced to ashes, and their property plundered or destroyed; and every miscreant who had private malice to gratify led a troop of incendiaries to the quarter where he desired to glut his vengeance. Amidst this scene of wild uproar and general rapine, the caprice of the wayward mob took a strange character. They insisted upon conferring knighthood upon all their favorites among the leaders of the democratical party, who had first instigated the resistance of the people against the oligarchy; and in the revolution of their phrenzy they even added others, whose houses they had but just demolished, to the number. Above sixty of the principal citizens of Florence, trembling for their lives, were compelled to receive the honors of chivalry from a ferocious rabble who, if they had betrayed the least signs of reluctance, would have torn them to pieces with as little hesitation as they bestowed this curious mark of their approbation.

Anarchy in the republic.

During these excesses, which lasted for three days, all government in Florence was at an end. On the first morning, the signiory vainly attempted to treat with the insurgents, and the house of the gonfalonier of justice was burnt; on the following day, the populace attacked and carried the palace of the podestá by assault; and they then condescended to signify to the signiory their propositions for the reform of the republic. These conditions were at first confined to the establishment of three new arts, two for the mechanics

dependant on the drapers, and one for the lowest populace; it being provided at the same time that two of the eight priors should be chosen from these new companies; and that all civil actions for debts under fifty florins should be forbidden for ten years, with some minor stipulations. But the demands of the insurgents rose in extravagance with the concessions of the signiory; the usual forms of assembling the councils for confirming their proposals into laws could not be dispatched, to keep pace with their impatience; and, on the third day, the mob assembled about the palace of the signiory in greater numbers and with more appalling violence than ever. They ordered the priors to abdicate their station, on pain of being massacred with all their families; they compelled them to fly; the gates of the public palace were then thrown open; the populace entered; and the work of anarchy was completed.

Patriotism of Michel di Lando.

At that moment which seemed to consummate the ruin of the republic, Florence was saved by an accidental caprice of the rabble, and by the singular character of one of the rioters. When the multitude rushed into the public palace, the standard of justice, which had been wrested from the charge of the gonfalonier on the first day of the insurrection, happened to be in the hands of a wool-comber, one Michel di Lando. This man, bare-footed and ragged, preceded the populace, and, ascending the great staircase to the audience hall of the priors, turned round to the people and cried aloud to them that the palace and the city

CHAP. V. PART II.

itself were their own, and demanded to know their sovereign will. The thoughtless mob, seeing the gonfalon in his hand, at once shouted their acclamations that he should himself be gonfalonier and reform the state at his pleasure. This unwashed artificer was thus raised by the breath of the fickle multitude to be absolute lord of Florence; and might perhaps, from the same hour, have established a tyranny, more despotic and ruinous than that attempted by the duke of Athens. But, although he had borne an obscure part in the insurrection, Michel di Lando sincerely loved his country, and was moreover, notwithstanding his abject station, fortunately gifted with sound judgment and undaunted courage. He resolutely set about the re-establishment of order; and, while the populace were momentarily calmed, he decreed that the signiory of nine, the gonfalonier and eight priors, should thenceforward be taken in equal proportions from the greater arts, the lesser arts, and the lower people. With this intention, the bags, from which the magistracy was to be drawn for the following two years, were replenished by the usual process of election and ballot.

Restoration of order.

The leaders of the democratical party who had originally animated the people to resist the Guelf oligarchy, though they were not the authors of the sedition of the ciompi, now thought to reap the fruits of the revolution. The eight commissioners of war, who belonged to their faction, had alone of all the late government remained in the

palace; and, fancying themselves masters of the state, began to elect new priors. But Lando, who knew how to maintain his authority, sent them a peremptory order, which they dared not resist, to abdicate. He then with the signiory, which was elected according to his scheme, took vigorous measures for the preservation of order; he obliged the populace by menaces of punishment to resume their usual occupations; and tranquillity once more reigned in Florence. But when the ciompi had recovered the first astonishment into which they were thrown by the measures of their chosen leader, they were far from being satisfied with the cessation of anarchy and the sudden termination of the licence in which they had revelled. Their indignation against Lando was unbounded, and their evil spirit was shewn by fresh indications of revolt. But the gonfalonier was unshaken in his purpose: he collected a large body of mounted citizens, who possessed a stake in the commonwealth and cheerfully supported his government; and when the seditious mob rose again in arms, he fearlessly met them, charged and routed them in the streets, and, not without considerable slaughter, utterly quelled their dangerous insurrection. Having thus triumphantly preserved the public liberty which had lain prostrate at his feet, he proved the purity of his intentions and established his title to the gratitude of his country, by retiring from office in the proper rotation of the magistracy:—a memorable example of true patriotism in a station

CHAP. V. PART II.

of life in which temptation is strongest, and disinterestedness most difficult of exercise.

Triumph of the democratical faction.

In the successive insurrections of the lesser arts and of the ciompi, the aristocratical faction had been completely overpowered and many of its leaders exiled, fined, or ennobled to deprive them of political rights; and when the revolt of the ciompi was in turn suppressed, the democratical party, or that of the lesser arts, immediately preponderated. When the companies of the arts were assembled in the public square, at the first drawing of magistrates which succeeded the retirement of Lando, the incorporated citizens received the three priors who had been selected, according to the late regulations, jointly from the new arts and the ciompi, with open contempt. They hooted them from the spot, they declared unanimously that they would not suffer persons of such base condition to sit in the signiory, and, as the spirit of the lower populace had been utterly crushed by the chastisement which they had undergone, the constitution was again changed without opposition. It was resolved that the nine members of the signiory should in future be taken, four from the greater arts and five from the lesser, which now were sixteen in number. The triumph of the lesser arts over the ciompi raised to the surface the chiefs of the old democratical party; and thus the men, by whom the late troubles had been originally excited, were left at their close in possession of the power at which they had aimed. Giorgio Scali, Tomaso

Strozzi, Salvestro de' Medici, and Benedetto Alberti, all great commoners who had been driven by hatred of their adversaries in the aristocratical party to embrace the cause of the people, were the leaders of the faction which, with the support of the lesser arts, now became supreme in the state.

Administration of its leaders.

The new government which these men moved at their pleasure was detested by both extremes of the population: by the ciompi and the aristocratical party. But strong in the affections of the lesser arts, whose numerous militia were at their command, the rulers of the state might treat the machinations of the lower populace with contempt and defiance; and when their discontent broke out it was punished with vigorous severity. The aristocracy by their wealth and station were far more dangerous; and the demagogues who swayed the republic did not scruple to employ an iniquitous procedure for effecting the destruction of those leaders of the aristocratical faction whom proscription had hitherto spared. Under pretence of a conspiracy, Piero Albizzi and several of the most distinguished citizens in Florence of his party were arrested; but no evidence was produced of their guilt, and the podestá refused to condemn them. Benedetto Alberti, who in general integrity was very superior to his colleagues, was led by his blind hatred of the aristocratical party to follow up an atrocious vengeance against them, which has left a foul stain upon his memory. He declared to the podestá, in the name

Their judicial murders. 1379

CHAP. V. PART II.

of his fellow-citizens, that, if judgment were not immediately executed upon the prisoners, the people would take the cause into their own hands; the populace threatened the judge himself, on his resisting this interference, with instant death if he suffered the noble malefactors to escape; and the devoted victims were finally dragged to the scaffold with the prostituted forms of justice.

Their tyranny,

These infamous measures seemed to strengthen the power of the demagogues; and, for nearly three years, they continued to direct the councils of the state. But as their security increased, they became overbearing and insolent towards all their fellow-citizens; and they continued to oppress their enemies by the odious employment of stipendiary informers. The tide of popularity set against them, and in favor of the fallen Guelfs; Tomaso Strozzi and Giorgio Scali persisted, notwithstanding, in their headlong career of audacity; and Benedetto Alberti dissolved his connection with tyrants more arrogant, more despotic, and more dangerous to freedom, than the oligarchy to which they had succeeded. While the public dissatisfaction was at its height, a last outrage of Scali and Strozzi against the majesty of the republic, in rescuing one of their perjured spies from the hands of justice, rouzed the spirit of the existing signiory, and inflamed the resentment of the people. Alberti himself counselled their punishment: Strozzi fled, but Scali was arrested and lost his head on the scaffold.

and fall. 1382

Restoration of the Guelf oligarchy to power.

The punishment of this demagogue proved the signal for the ruin of all his party: the friends of the Guelf oligarchy began to stir in the city, and to avail themselves of the revulsion of popular feeling; in a few days afterwards the streets were suddenly filled with armed men; and at the sound of their cries of "Live the Guelfs!" all the ancient attachment of the citizens to that name, identified though it had become with the cause of the oligarchy, at once revived. The old nobility, the Albizzi, and the popolani grandi, their adherents, were suffered to possess themselves of the city without opposition; to name a committee of an hundred citizens to reform the state; and so to re-establish, after three years of depression, the supremacy of the Guelf corporation and of the oligarchy by which it had been governed. The committee of dictatorship or *balia*, as such an assembly was called at Florence, immediately commenced their office of reform. Besides restoring all its ancient functions and power to the Guelf corporation, the balia decreed that the two new arts created for the lower trades should be abolished; and that the lesser arts generally, now reduced to their former number of fourteen, should supply only a third, instead of more than one-half of the public magistracy.

The new government displayed the usual passions of an Italian faction. They exiled the chiefs of several illustrious houses, who had supported the democratical cause; they passed the same sentence on Michel di Lando, the saviour of

CHAP. V. PART II.

his country, whose services and virtues merited the gratitude and applause of every friend of order; and after persecuting Benedetto Alberti in various ways for some years, they at length banished him also. But notwithstanding these acts of violence, the Guelf aristocracy had acquired moderation and prudence by the experience of former errors; they reversed all the sentences passed against the partizans of their own faction, but, at the same time, they annulled the admonitions which they had themselves put in force against their enemies; and, secure in their wealth and in the ancient respect which attached to their families and their faction, they continued, under the direction of the great house of the Albizzi, to enjoy for nearly fifty years a leading influence in the government of the Florentine republic. *

Affairs of Venice.

While Florence, in the brief space of four years, was passing through the arduous ordeal of so

* For these notices of the internal history of Florence from 1343 to 1382, my original authorities are G. Villani, b. xii. c. 79. M. Villani, b. viii. c. 24. ad p. 32. and x. c. 22. ad p. 25. Gino Capponi, Del Tumulto de' Ciompi, throughout —a spirited fragment (vol. xviii. Scrip. Rer. Ital.) by a contemporary, who provokingly deserts us at the most critical moment of that insurrection, when Lando is chosen gonfalonier.

I have also referred to Machiavelli, Istor. Fiorent. b. iii. pp. 198—260, a fine piece of political painting; for the contest of factions is a happy subject for displaying the peculiar excellencies of that great historian. And I have much consulted Sismondi, c. 50.; and admired Mr. Hallam's powers of compression in embodying the various Florentine revolutions of this interesting period into a dozen pages.

many domestic revolutions, another Italian republic stood on the very brink of destruction. The ruin which had menaced the Tuscan state was contained in her own bosom: the imminent danger that threatened the existence of Venice arose from the alarming confederation of foreign enemies.

After the inglorious peace of 1358, many years had passed without any interesting occurrence in the Venetian annals. The state was, however, harassed by a formidable rebellion in Candia, 1363
which had its origin, not among the indigenous and subjugated population of that island, but with the descendants of the noble colonists of Venice, who had found themselves deprived, by the closing of the great council, of those privileges in the parent city which their ancestors had enjoyed. They were even more disaffected to the Venetian government than the rest of the Candiotes. They excited the whole island to revolt; they established an independent government; and it was only after a contest of several years and with th aid of a numerous body of mercenary troops, that Venice succeeded in chastising the insurrection of this important colony. At length, after the devastation of the island, and the cruel punishment of all the movers of the rebellion, the despotic administration of Venice was securely re- 1367
established, and every germ of independence so completely eradicated from among the colonists, that this was the last effort of the Candiotes to throw off the yoke.

CHAP. V. PART II.

While Venice was with difficulty reducing her revolted subjects to obedience, her repose was troubled from a quarter from whence, if personal gratitude were ever numbered among political virtues, she might have expected fidelity and support. Francesco da Carrara had forgotten that his house were indebted for the lordship of Padua and all their consequent grandeur to the Venetian republic. In her war with the king of Hungary he had supplied the troops of that monarch with provisions; and he strengthened the recollection which the indignant republic cherished of this ungrateful conduct by a continuance of insult and injury. He attempted to enlarge the Paduan territory by encroaching on the Venetian frontier in the Trevisan March; from his states, which bordered on the lagune, he carried his machinations and conspiracies against the oligarchy of Venice into the heart of their capital itself; and when the vigilance of the council of ten had detected and punished his emissaries, the senate resolved to take signal vengeance for his open aggressions and secret
1372 treachery. They therefore declared war against him, invaded the Paduan state, and routed his troops; and though the king of Hungary, bearing in mind the good offices which Carrara had formerly rendered to him against the Venetians, dispatched an army to his aid, and turned the scale of success for a time in his favor, the republican arms finally prevailed. The Hungarian general was defeated and made prisoner, his soldiers

refused to fight again until he should be ransomed, and Carrara was thus forced to sue for peace. It was only granted by the Venetian senate upon the most galling conditions; for, besides submitting the demarkation of his frontiers to the will of the conquerors, the lord of Padua was compelled to pay large contributions; and to send his son in his name to Venice, to kneel before the doge, and in that posture to solicit pardon for his aggressions and swear fealty to the republic. 1373

Francesco da Carrara had probably been actuated in his projects against the Venetians only by the ordinary motives of unprincipled ambition; but the humiliation which had proved the only fruit of his schemes, inspired him with profound detestation of that people, and animated him with the concealed resolution of future revenge. It was not many years before an occasion presented itself for the indulgence of his purpose. The inveterate animosity which had prevailed for ages between Venice and Genoa might slumber in exhaustion or repose, but was never extinguished; and the spirit of warlike rivalry, the petty jealousies of trade, and the conflicting interests of their colonies in the east, were ever in action to foster the mutual hatred of the two republics, and to kindle the flames of war. The last contest between these maritime states had originated in their commercial disputes in the Euxine, and it was still in the eastern seas that the new and more

CHAP. V. PART II.

memorable struggle arose, in which the lord of Padua bore a prominent share.

Rupture of the republic with Genoa.

While the arms of the Turks were rapidly dismembering the Greek empire, and the incessant revolutions of Constantinople were hastening the fall of the feeble monarchy, the Genoese and Venetians were constantly at hand to foment the intrigues of the imperial palace, and to grasp with selfish ambition at the ruins of the Christian dominion. The continental possessions of the eastern empire were now almost embraced within the walls of the capital; but, of the few islands which had not been wrested from it, that of Tenedos, which commanded the Propontis and the channel of the Hellespont, attracted the cupidity of both the Italian republics. The Genoese obtained the cession of it as the price of assisting an usurper against his father; the opposite party
1376 anticipated them by delivering it into the hands of the Venetians, who determined to preserve so important an acquisition; and the Genoese then, under the plea of their alliance with the usurper, assisted him in an ineffectual attempt to dislodge their garrison.

The indirect hostilities which thus commenced for the possession of Tenedos between the Genoese and Venetians, soon afterwards assumed a more decided character. At the coronation of Pierre de Lusignan, king of Cyprus, in 1373, a dispute for precedence had arisen between these ambitious republicans who held powerful esta-

blishments in that island. The Cypriot court favored the pride of the Venetians; the Genoese resisted the preference and repaired to the royal banquet in arms to support their pretensions; they were overpowered and thrown out of the windows of the palace; and their insolence so excited the fury of the Cypriots that it produced a general massacre of their countrymen in the island.* The republic of Genoa was not slow to avenge the murder of her citizens: a formidable armament was immediately fitted out and dispatched to Cyprus; the whole island was conquered; and after exercising a summary vengeance upon the principal instigators of the massacre, the Genoese obliged Lusignan to become their tributary, and left a garrison in his capital. The Cypriot king submitted to their yoke with impatience, until he observed the rising quarrel between the maritime republics for the possession of Tenedos. He then sought the alliance of Venice, himself rose in arms, and engaged Bernabo Visconti, to whose daughter he was betrothed, to expend her dowry in attacking the Genoese in Liguria.

The Genoese attributed all the wars in which they now found themselves engaged in Tenedos, in Cyprus, and in Liguria, to the hatred and jealousy of the Venetians. They resolved to retaliate on their rivals by the formation of a league among the enemies of Venice, and with this intention they applied to the lord of Padua. Carrara needed little solicitation to forward their views:

CHAP. V. PART II.

and, by his exertions, the most formidable coalition which had ever endangered the independence of Venice was rapidly organized. Besides Genoa and the lord of Padua, Louis king of Hungary, Joanna queen of Naples, the brothers Della Scala, reigning signors of Verona, the duke of Austria, and the patriarch of Aquileia—who imitated his predecessors, the eternal enemies of Venice—had all their various causes of offence against the republic, and eagerly confederated for her destruction. To oppose them she was left with no other ally than the lord of Milan, who had attacked Genoa at the instigation of the king of Cyprus, and whose object it was not to succour Venice, but to seize a favorable occasion for making conquests in Liguria and the Veronese dominions. Thus on the consummation of the Genoese league, hostilities immediately burst forth from one extremity of Lombardy to the other. While two Milanese armies severally entered Liguria and the Veronese state, the troops of Hungary, Padua, and Aquileia, on the other hand, invaded from opposite points both the district of Treviso and the *Dogado*, or narrow territory of Venice which bordered on her lagunes. All these operations, which were as usual carried on principally with mercenary troops, were generally indecisive, and present few details that deserve to be recorded. Merely observing, therefore, that the confederates, to whom Venice could scarcely oppose an adequate resistance, overran her territory on the main land to the edge of the lagunes and strait-

Powerful league against Venice.

1378

ened her within those waters, I shall turn from the notice of continental hostilities, to relate the events of the maritime struggle between Genoa and Venice which have given to this memorable contest the name of the war of Chiozza.

War of Chiozza.

It was in the Tuscan seas, off the promontory of Antium, on which the ancients had elevated a temple to Fortune,* that the fleets of Genoa and Venice encountered each other for the first time in this war. But the forces of the hostile squadrons did not correspond with the power which we have seen the two republics display in former contests. Their numerous mariners, who were scattered over the seas in commercial occupations, could not during the first year be recalled for the service of their states: fewer vessels were armed than had been usual, and these were distributed into small expeditions. The Genoese stationed their admiral, Fiesco, on the coast of Tuscany, with only ten galliés, for the protection of their trade: the armament which the Venetians dispatched to the same quarter consisted of fourteen sail under Vettor Pisani, the most illustrious and able of their commanders. The two squadrons engaged with the fierce and courageous spirit which had ever distinguished the wars of their republics; the event was decided only by superiority of numbers; and Pisani, capturing five gallies, obtained a complete victory. A small Venetian force, which had been sent to Cyprus,

Naval operations.

* O Diva gratum quæ regis Antium.

Hor.

CHAP. V. PART II.

also gained a partial advantage over the Genoese, and burnt several of their vessels in the port of Famagosta; but the principal attention of both parties was shortly attracted from all other objects to the waters of the Adriatic.

The remains of the fleet which Pisani had defeated, instead of attempting to fly for refuge to their own ports, boldly steered southward, and doubling the capes of Italy directed their course to the Adriatic, where Luciano Doria, great admiral of Genoa, by degrees accumulated a fleet of twenty-two gallies, and menaced the security of Venice. The senate of that republic recalled Pisani to the defence of the gulf; but though the fleet under his orders had now been augmented to twenty-five gallies, besides a small force which he had detached to operate a diversion in other quarters under Carlo Zeno, he could not avail himself of his trifling superiority to force the Genoese to an action. Doria had numerous points of support in the harbours of the king of Hungary; and while the Genoese admiral ravaged the Istrian dominions of Venice on the one hand, and his adversary on the other captured some maritime towns of Dalmatia, the remainder of the summer passed without any encounter between their fleets.

On the approach of winter, the Venetian senate, to prevent Doria from commanding the navigation of the gulf, obliged their admiral to keep the sea with his squadron, notwithstanding his urgent representations of its exhausted state. During this long and fatal cruize in the severe season, a

destructive epidemic, which broke out in the Venetian gallies, carried off immense numbers of the seamen; and Pisani had at length been compelled to seek repose for his enfeebled squadron in the Istrian port of Pola, when the Genoese fleet of twenty-two gallies appeared in the offing. The Venetian sailors were driven to desperation by the hardships of their lengthened service; they were eager to terminate their sufferings by bringing the enemy to action; and Pisani, hastily completing his crew with the landsmen of Pola, was unwillingly reduced to yield to the clamours of his followers and to lead them against the Genoese. Yet his anticipation of the result did not prevent him from discharging all the duties of a valiant and experienced admiral. He furiously attacked the Genoese, and their admiral fell in the onset: but Luciano Doria was only one of a race of heroes; and his brother, immediately assuming the command, animated his followers to revenge and victory. In courage they were equal to the Venetians; in numbers and in skill they were superior to a mixture of landsmen and sailors enfeebled by disease. Pisani was utterly defeated: he could save only seven gallies, and he had no sooner taken refuge with them in Venice, than he was consigned by the senate to a dungeon, as if their error had been his crime.

Total defeat of the Venetian fleet. 1379

While Venice was filled with consternation at this defeat, the Genoese squadron was augmented by a strong reinforcement to forty-eight gallies;

CHAP. V. PART II.

and Piero Doria, another of the same noble family, as the late admiral, arriving from Genoa to succeed him, immediately prepared to complete the destruction of the rival republic. After concerting his measures with the lord of Padua, he appeared off the long line of narrow islands which separate the Venetian lagune from the Adriatic. These strips of land are intersected by six openings * which were navigable for the armed vessels of the times, and formed so many entrances into the lagune. All of these the senate had caused to be hastily closed by triple chains, booms, and other defences, behind which were moored heavy vessels planted with artillery. Doria after some hesitation resolved to force the most southerly, except one, of the six passages. Just within this opening, among a groupe of the interior islets of the lagune, like those upon which Venice itself is built, stands the town of Chiozza, twenty-five miles south of the capital. A deep canal, cut through the shallows of the lagune, forms the

* Sismondi enumerates six entrances to the lagune which were navigable for the gallies of the times; besides those of Brondolo and Fossone which, discharging the waters of the Brenta and Adige, communicate with the lagune. But Daru, whose local knowledge I may prefer, speaks only of six, including the outlets of those rivers which their deposits have since choaked up; and he explains the accuracy of his statement by a chart, copied from one in the memoir of the learned Filiasi on the early history of Venice. The contemporary Italian chroniclers are careless in the description of localities with which, I suppose, they took it for granted that their readers must be as familiar as themselves.

only passage for large vessels from Chiozza to Venice and the outlets to the sea farther north; but besides the opening immediately opposite to the town, the channel of Brondolo, still more southward, affords another communication between Chiozza and the Adriatic.

The entrance into the lagunes of Venice forced by the Genoese fleet.

When Doria resolved to penetrate into the lagune through the strongly fortified opening before Chiozza, it was agreed that Francesco da Carrara should co-operate with him from the Brenta, which flows into the lagune, by descending that river with a numerous flotilla, following the deep channels which its waters had delved through the shallows towards the outlet of Chiozza, and assaulting the passage in rear while the Genoese gave their onset from without. Success attended this combined operation. The small Venetian force which occupied the floating defences of the pass, thus placed between two superior attacks, could oppose but a brief resistance, though their struggle was vigorous; and the Genoese fleet rode triumphantly within the lagune and formed the siege of Chiozza. The Venetians had thrown a garrison of three thousand men into the place, and these troops, aided by the burghers, made a gallant and obstinate defence; but the united forces of the Genoese and of Carrara, who posted part of his army to prosecute the siege on the neighbouring island of Brondolo, with which Chiozza was connected by a bridge, were by land and sea twenty-four thousand strong; and after a series of furious con-

CHAP. V. PART II.

Capture of Chiozza.

flicts, in which the besiegers lost in six days almost as many men as the whole numbers of the garrison, they finally entered the town by storm. Four thousand prisoners fell into their hands, and the banner of St. George floated from the towers of Chiozza above the reversed lion of St. Mark.

Extremity of Venice.

Such was the consternation which the capture of this advanced post of the capital excited at Venice, that the doge was reduced to sue for peace. His ambassadors took with them some Genoese prisoners who were released as a propitiatory offering to Doria, and a sheet of blank paper, on which the admiral and the lord of Padua were desired to dictate their pleasure to the republic with no other reservation than her freedom. Carrara was anxious to terminate the war at so favorable a moment; but the Genoese admiral seeing the ancient and detested rival of his country prostrate before him, was steeled against mercy by national hatred, the desire of vengeance, and the confidence of victory. Summoning the ambassadors to a public audience before him and Carrara, he thus addressed them: "I declare unto you before God, ye Venetian lords, that ye shall have no peace from the lord of Padua nor from our republic, until first we have put a curb in the mouths of those wild horses that stand on your place of St. Mark. When we have them bridled to our hands, they shall be tame enough. Take back your Genoese prisoners, for I shall be with you at Venice in a few days to

release both them and their companions from your dungeons."

Courageous spirit of the senate and people.

When this insulting answer was reported at Venice, the senate prepared for the defence of the republic with the energy which was characteristic of their counsels; and they succeeded in animating the people with a spirit that seconded their own. But when the popular enthusiasm was rouzed, there was but one man in Venice on whom the general confidence and affection of her mariners and citizens could repose. The multitude bore in mind the successful services of Vettor Pisani, and thought only of his misfortunes to remember the injustice of the disgrace and imprisonment in which he languished. The whole city simultaneously rose to demand the release of the only man who seemed capable of delivering the sinking state; the public palace was besieged with loud acclamations of "Live Vettor Pisani, our admiral!"; * and the senate, abandoning in this

* It is to be regretted that the severity of historical criticism must often discard very epigrammatic speeches which have been composed for celebrated men. Sanuto (Vite de' Duchi di Venezia, p. 691.) relates a story, which Sismondi and Hallam have copied after him, that Pisani, who was confined in the cells under the palace of St. Mark, hearing the cries with which the populace without demanded his release, sprang, notwithstanding his chains, to a window, and from thence repressed their favoring shouts, and bade them reserve their enthusiasm for St. Mark, the symbol and war-cry of Venice. But state prisons do not usually open to public streets; and, less than any, would the gloomy dungeons of so suspicious a government as that of Venice.—

CHAP. V. PART II.

season of peril the inflexible firmness of their ordinary policy, yielded to the popular voice, and drew Pisani from his prison to bestow on him the office of high-admiral. The hero nobly forgot his personal injuries in the danger of his country; he rendered a prompt and modest obedience to the senate; and under his intrepid and able conduct, the fortunes of Venice revived. The inaction of Doria favored his exertions to rally and collect the disorganized strength of the republic. For above two months, the Genoese admiral remained in possession of Chiozza, and within sight of Venice, without attempting any enterprize against the city. It is not easy to account for this apparent supineness except by the probability that, while the difficulties of the navigation deterred Doria from hazarding his gallies among the intricacies and shallows of the lagune, he confidently relied upon starving the Venetians into a surrender. They were cut off from intercourse with the neighbouring continent of Italy, Dalmatia, and Istria, by the Paduan and Hungarian troops; and the Genoese obstructed the approach of supplies from the sea. But instead of tamely awaiting the approach of famine, the Venetians in the midst of their privations were working out their deliverance, under the guidance of Pisani, by labour and patriotic sacrifices. The first care

Fortunately for the glory of this real hero, his magnanimous patriotism stands upon better record than so questionable a tradition.

of their great commander was to occupy the deep and narrow channel, which led from Chiozza to Venice, with large round vessels or floating batteries, armed with heavy artillery; for the use of ordnance had now become general.* All the other canals and passages which communicated between Venice and the sea were similarly guarded; and after these precautions had been effectually taken, the Venetians proceeded to equip a new fleet. Their docks contained only a few dismantled gallies: but others were rapidly constructed; contributions of all kinds were eagerly made by the patriotism of individuals; in the exhaustion of the national funds and the ruin of commerce, private plate was melted and offered to the state; and the senate stimulated the emulation of the citizens, by promising to

Their energetic exertions to equip a fleet.

* Some of the cannon employed in this war, or *bombards* as they were called, were of enormous calibre. "Due grosse bombarde," says the chronicle of Daniele Chinazzo, "l'una detta la Trivisana che gettava pietre di peso di libre 195, l' altra detta la Vittoria che ne gettava di peso di libre 140." Yet the use of stone balls of so immense a weight as two hundred pounds betrays the infancy of the art rather than its power, since it was yet unperceived that, as the great quantity of powder wasted in a single charge could not be ignited at the same instant, only a small part of it could really act upon the projectile. No idea was entertained of the possibility of discharging this heavy ordnance oftener than once in twenty-four hours: the bombard was loaded in the night, and discharged in the morning. The ball was thrown at an elevation like a modern shell; its aim was uncertain; and the general chance of mischief was taken. But the shock and weight of a single ball was sufficient to sink the largest galley, or to lay in ruins the lofty walls which composed the defences of the times.

CHAP. V. PART II.

ennoble thirty plebeian families who should most distinguish themselves in zeal and devotion to the state. In this manner a fleet of thirty-four gallies was fitted out; but the want of seamen compelled Pisani to man them in a great part with artisans and other landsmen, and some time was passed in exercising their motley crews in the canals of Venice, before the admiral could venture to lead them against the veteran seamen of Genoa.

and skilful operations.

At length the moment arrived at which the Venetians dared in their turn to become the assailants. Doria had laid part of his gallies up to give repose to his sailors during the winter; and observing with alarm the increasing strength of an enemy whom he had despised, he concentrated his whole force about Chiozza. At this juncture, in a December night, the doge Canterini, a brave old man who had passed his seventieth year, carried the standard of Venice on board the ducal galley; and assuming in person the principal command of the fleet, which was accompanied by a numerous flotilla of light barks, led the armament out of the lagune opposite to Venice, and steering down the gulf suddenly appeared at the mouth of the passage of Chiozza, through which Doria had orginally forced his way into the lagune. The Genoese little suspected that his design was to enclose them in the station which they had victoriously assumed; when he pushed one of the large round vessels, which we have seen employed in former contests under the name of

cocche, into the narrow channel of Chiozza, and anchored her there to block up the strait. The Genoese gallies came out to attack her, overpowered her crew, and imprudently set her on fire. She burnt to the water's edge and went to the bottom on the spot; and the Venetians, then deriving more profit from this accident than they had anticipated from their first design, advanced with boat-loads of stones, and sinking these successively upon her, completely choaked up the channel. After this exploit of the doge, there yet remained to the Genoese two outlets from Chiozza: they might either advance towards Venice along the principal canal of the lagune which communicated with some of the northerly passages into the open sea; or regain the Adriatic in the opposite direction by retiring through the port of Brondolo, the most southerly of the six openings. But Pisani at once closed the canal against them by sinking loads of stones in the same manner as had been done before Chiozza; and while the Genoese, still apparently unconscious of their danger, made no effort to put to sea through the pass of Brondolo, the Venetian admiral again issued from the lagune, and boldly sailing to the only point of egress which was yet open to the enemy, posted his inferior fleet in so able a manner at the mouth of the port of Brondolo, that the Genoese could neither issue from it, nor form their line of battle in the narrow channel to attack him.

CHAP. V. PART II.

The Genose blockaded in the lagune.

The position of the combatants was thus completely reversed, and the Genoese found themselves enclosed in the toils. But still as their ally, the lord of Padua, held the neighbouring continent, it was not easy for the Venetians to reduce them by famine, and their great superiority of force, utterly forbade an assault upon them. Farther, although the manner in which Pisani had skilfully disposed his fleet prevented the Genose from issuing or forming to engage, his own situation was one of great peril and risk. Part of his gallies were compelled to lie under the fire of the enemy's batteries; the first gale or even squall which should blow him for a few hours off the port of Brondolo must immediately give release to the besieged squadron; and if the Genoese could once regain the open sea, the advantage of numbers and seamanship was entirely on their side. The Venetian crews were discouraged by the insecurity and hardships of their station, they were exhausted with the incessant and wearisome duty of keeping the sea to guard the blockade, and utterly averse from passing the whole winter in this harassing service. Yet if Pisani quitted his commanding posture at the strait of Brondolo, and allowed the Genoese to come out, Venice, which was even now provisioned with much difficulty, must be again cut off from supplies and famished into surrender. To rekindle the expiring courage of his followers and shame them from deserting him, the old doge

took a solemn oath before the assembled armament, that he would never return to Venice, till the banner of St. Mark should again wave over Chiozza. Pisani and all the leading Venetians laboured with equal earnestness to encourage the soldiery and mariners, by cheering them with the hope of speedy relief, from the return of the squadron which had been detached on a cruize into other seas before the defeat of Pisani at Polo.

Carlo Zeno, who in courage, and skill, and patriotism, was almost worthy to be ranked with that great admiral, had when he quitted the Adriatic only eight gallies under his orders; but with this force, after making some valuable captures of Genoese merchant vessels off Sicily, and proceeding from thence to carry insult and terror into the coasts of Genoa, he had quitted the Italian seas, and steered for Greece and the Levant. There, among the Venetian colonies, his squadron was gradually augmented to eighteen gallies; and he was about to bring home the merchant fleets of Venice, which with their rich cargoes awaited convoy in the Syrian ports, when one of the light barks, which had been dispatched to him through the fleet of the besiegers to announce the danger of his country and to declare the orders of the signiory for his recall, at length succeeded in reaching him.

While the squadron of Pisani lay off Brondolo, every eye anxiously sought the horizon of the Adriatic for the expected succours, of which no

CHAP. V. PART II.

intelligence had yet been received. But successive days passed in disappointment; the patience of the Venetians was utterly worn out; and the doge was induced to promise them that he would raise the blockade of Chiozza, if the long hoped for reinforcement did not arrive by the first of January 1380. To this crisis there wanted at the time only forty-eight hours, before Venice must be besieged in her turn; and the senate were already deliberating whether they should not transfer the seat of their republic to Candia,

1380 when, on the very morning of the first of January, a squadron was discerned in the offing. Eighteen gallies were counted as they drew near, well armed and stored with provisions; and the cheers that rang through the fleets of Venice proclaimed the arrival of Carlo Zeno.

Increase of the Venetian force and confidence.

From that hour abundance reigned in the markets of Venice, the courage of the seamen and troops revived, and the united squadrons of Pisani and Zeno outnumbered the enemy. By the vigorous attacks which the Venetians now commenced, the Genoese were gradually, from being enclosed in the lagune, confined within Chiozza itself, and their communications with the continent intercepted. Famine then began to threaten them; but they continued to defend themselves with obstinate courage for several months in anxious expectation of relief. But when a second fleet, which their republic dispatched to their aid, at last appeared off the lagune, the entrances were so completely closed and strongly fortified,

that the new expedition could neither force a passage to succour Chiozza, nor bring the Venetians, who remained cautiously within the lagune, to an encounter. The besieged Genoese made one desperate and ingenious attempt to effect a passage through their enemies and to join their countrymen, but it was frustrated; and then, perishing with famine, and entirely cut off from hope of rescue, even in sight of the fleet which had vainly sought to release them, the remains of the proud armament which had denied mercy to Venice, were finally compelled to surrender at discretion. Only nineteen gallies, out of forty-eight, were still in good condition; and in ten months which had elapsed since their capture of Chiozza, the fourteen thousand seamen and soldiers which had manned the fleet were diminished in equal proportion. *

Surrender of the Genoese fleet.

The surrender of Chiozza saved Venice, but did not terminate the war; and while that republic,—her resources consumed, her treasury empty, her commerce stagnant, her revenues and dominions in Istria and Italy in the hands of enemies—was reduced to the last stage of distress and exhaustion by the prodigious efforts which she had made, the fresh Genoese fleet, nine and thirty

Continuation of the war.

* Piero Doria had been spared by a timely death from witnessing the fatal results, which he had provoked by suffering his fleet to be blocked up in Chiozza. A shot from a bombard beat down part of the wall of the fortified convent of Brondolo, as he was inspecting the works there soon after the Venetians had stationed themselves off that port, and crushed him under the ruins.

CHAP. V. PART II.

gallies strong, still rode the Adriatic. She therefore earnestly desired peace; and the rival republic, in the loss or captivity of the flower of her seamen, had equal reason to deplore the indulgence of national animosity. But it was not until the following year that the demands of the Genoese league were reduced within the limits of the sacrifices which Venice was contented to make. At length, under the mediation of the count of Savoy, terms were mutually adjusted; and by the peace of Turin, Venice recovered the repose for which she sighed. But she was compelled to abandon her territorial acquisitions on the Italian continent, and could only console herself that, by having already ceded Treviso to the duke of Austria, she had prevented it from passing to her most inveterate enemy, Francesco da Carrara. But in favor of that lord she cancelled all the conditions of the treaty of 1372; to the king of Hungary she engaged to pay contributions and confirmed the relinquishment of her possessions on the opposite coasts; and, finally, to Genoa she conceded the abandonment of the isle of Tenedos, the original cause of dispute. The dominion of Venice, except over her trans-marine colonies, was now confined to the circuit of the lagune; while Genoa, however imperfect the recompense for so many sufferings, in some measure held the palm of victory.—Yet we shall find Venice reviving, after the exhaustion of this war of Chiozza, to a brilliant pre-eminence of power and commercial prosperity; and Genoa, on the contrary,

Peace of Turin. 1381

silently wasting into debility, as if excess of exertion had fatally strained the secret springs of her vigour and strength. *

* Daniele Chinazzo, Cronica della Guerra di Chiozza. Giorgio Stella, Annales Genuenses, pp. 1105—1119. Marin Sanuto, Vite de' Duchi di Venezia, p. 676—720. Sismondi, c. 51.—Daru, vol. ii. pp. 16—164. The three first of the works here quoted, my original or at least native authorities for the war of Chiozza, are severally contained in the fifteenth, seventeenth, and twenty second volumes of Muratori's great collection, Scriptores Rerum Italicarum.

PART III.

*Affairs of Lombardy—Gian Galeazzo Visconti, Lord of Milan—War between the Signors of Verona and Padua—Interference of Gian Galeazzo in their Quarrel—His Overthrow of the House of Scala—His Projects against the House of Carrara—Conquest and Partition of their States—Alarming Power of Gian Galeazzo—His ambitious Designs in Tuscany—War between Florence and the Lord of Milan, and their Allies—Fortunes of Francesco Novello da Carrara—His Re-establishment in the Lordship of Padua—Prosecution of the War between Florence and the Lord of Milan—Defeat of the Count d' Armagnac, the Ally of Florence—Skilful Retreat of Hawkwood—Peace of Genoa—Perfidious Character and Intrigues of Gian Galeazzo Visconti—Erection of Milan into an Imperial Duchy—New War between Florence and the Duke of Milan, terminated by a Truce—Successful Machinations of Gian Galeazzo—Pisa, subjected to his Yoke—The Signiory of Sienna and Perugia surrendered to him—Decline of the Spirit of Freedom—Italy in Danger of falling under the universal Tyranny of the Duke of Milan—*REVOLUTIONS OF GENOA—*Rise of the commercial Aristocracy—Recovery of the Republic from the Milanese Yoke—Struggles of Faction—Incessant Revolutions, and Exhaustion of the Republic—Surrender of the State to the Protection of Charles VI. of France—*AFFAIRS OF NAPLES—*Continuation of the Reign of Joanna—Condition of Sicily—Charles of Durazzo adopted by Joanna for her Successor—His Rupture with her, and Enterprise against her Throne in Concert with Urban VI.—Adoption of the Duke of Anjou by Joanna—Conquest of Naples by Charles of Durazzo—Murder of Joanna—Expedition of Louis of Anjou into Naples—His Failure and Death—Reign of Charles III.—His Attempt to seize the Crown of Hungary, and Murder—Civil Wars in*

Naples between the Parties of Anjou and Durazzo—Louis II. (of Anjou)—Ladislaus (Son of Charles III.)—His Character and Success against his Rival—His final Establishment on the Throne.

THE power of the Visconti, which had for many years worn a formidable aspect in northern Italy, had not however been attended by the full effects of its alarming preponderance, so long as the possessions of that house were shared between the two brothers, Galeazzo and Bernabo. But, shortly after the termination of the war of Chiozza, the whole of the Milanese dominions were united under a single chief, who concentrated in his person all the odious and dangerous qualities of his family, and gave ample cause to the other states of the peninsula to apprehend the establishment of one wide-spreading and general tyranny. This was Gian Galeazzo, the son of Galeazzo, who, by the death of that lord in 1378, had inherited his portion of central Lombardy, and fixed his court at Pavia, while his uncle Bernabo resided at Milan.

The ties of kindred were as little valued by these perfidious usurpers as any other bonds of humanity; and the first efforts of Bernabo, on his brother's decease, were directed against the life and reign of his nephew. But Gian Galeazzo was more than a match for him in duplicity. While he warily guarded himself against the plots of Bernabo without seeming to penetrate them, he affected to be exclusively engrossed in devotional exercises and personal fears. Travelling

CHAP. V. PART III.

about with a retinue of priests, he was incessantly telling his beads and visiting the different saintly shrines of Lombardy; and his coward terrors were displayed in the number of guards, who constantly surrounded him and denied access to his presence. He thus gained his object of inspiring his uncle with a sovereign contempt for his imbecility; and as he passed near Milan on a pretended pilgrimage with a numerous escort, Bernabo and two of his sons came out to meet him without suspicion. The hypocrite received them with affectionate embraces; but suddenly turning to two of his captains, gave them an order in German—then the universal military language of Italy—to arrest his three relatives. Their soldiers immediately seized the bridle of the mule on which Bernabo rode; his sword was cut from his side; and he was dragged off the spot from his attendants with his sons, vainly imploring his nephew not to prove a traitor to his own blood. Milan at once opened her gates to Gian Galeazzo, and the captive signor was confined with his sons in one of her castles; where, in the course of a few months, poison was at three several times administered to Bernabo in his food, and at last terminated his flagitious existence. His crimes had rendered him so detested that neither his subjects nor allies shewed any inclination to avert or avenge his fate; and his nephew, throwing off the mask of devotion, reigned unopposed lord of the whole Milanese dependancies.

Gian Galeazzo Visconti, lord of Milan. 1385

The ambition of Gian Galeazzo, thus already steeped in unnatural crime, was not likely to be satisfied even with these great possessions; and a war, which was excited by Venice between the houses of Carrara and Scala, shortly opened a new field for his perfidious intrigues. The implacable hatred of the Venetians towards Francesco da Carrara had been strengthened by their sufferings in the war of Chiozza; and the purchase of Treviso and its district, which the lord of Padua effected from the duke of Austria some time after the termination of that contest, aggravated their long jealousy of so enterprising a neighbour. The enfeebled condition of their republic prevented them from openly provoking a new struggle with him; but they in secret instigated Antonio della Scala—a bastard of the house of Verona who, sharing the power of his legitimate brother, had caused him to be assassinated that he might reign alone—to declare war against Carrara, in revenge for the horror which that lord had publicly expressed at his guilt. But notwithstanding the pecuniary aid of Venice, the Veronese signor was unsuccessful in the struggle; and, after two great defeats of his mercenary troops in successive campaigns by those of Carrara, he was reduced to listen to the overtures of the lord of Milan.

War between the signors of Verona and Padua.

1386

Gian Galeazzo, from the commencement of hostilities between the combatants, had awaited the moment of their common exhaustion to offer succours to each that he might despoil them

Interference of Gian Galeazzo in their quarrel.

CHAP. V. PART III.

both: but such was their mutual dread of his character that they had in turn rejected his proffered aid, until the distresses of Scala left him no other resource than to escape more imminent danger by accepting his alliance; and Carrara, who had vainly sought peace, was then compelled to anticipate his purpose, and to sign a treaty with Gian Galeazzo for the partition of the Veronese dominions. This act was fatal to both the rivals. Antonio della Scala was utterly unequal to resist the coalition of the Milanese and Paduan signors; he was rapidly stripped of all his possessions and compelled to seek refuge at Venice with his treasures; and a single campaign accomplished the ruin of the house of Scala, which had reigned at Verona for above one hundred and twenty years, and more than once aspired to an universal supremacy over the peninsula. But it was farthest from the intention of Visconti that Carrara should share in the spoil. He knew the hatred which the Venetians bore to that lord; and after having enabled him to overthrow Scala, whom they had secretly aided but dared not openly protect, the crafty and perfidious tyrant at once proposed to them to dispossess the signor of Padua in turn of his dominions, and offered to enter into a league with their republic, to accomplish the ruin of their detested enemy and the partition of his states.

1387

His overthrow of the house of Scala.

His projects against the house of Carrara.

The skilful policy which usually actuated the Venetian senate might have suggested to them that Visconti, established on the shore of their

lagune, must prove infinitely a more dangerous neighbour than Carrara. In the lust of dominion, in faithless machinations, the lord of Padua could scarcely equal Gian Galeazzo: in power he was confessedly inferior, and less to be dreaded. Yet the senate, listening only to the dictates of ambition and vengeance, eagerly accepted the proffered alliance of the Milanese lord, and signed a 1388
treaty with him, into which the marquis of Este and the lord of Mantua were admitted, for the partition of the Paduan states. The old lord of Carrara, thus assailed by a coalition of enemies of whom the least was alone his equal in force, was at once reduced to the extremity of distress; for his subjects of Padua, oppressed by the accumulated burthens of successive wars, were clamorous and disaffected and eager for any revolution. In the general ruin which thus menaced his house, some of his counsellors suggested, as the only expedient for averting its consummation, his abdication of the signiory of Padua in favor of his son, Francesco Novello da Carrara. They represented to him that the enmity which the Venetians bore to him personally could not extend to this young man, that the hearts of the Paduans were with him, and that he would find new resources in their devotion. The old signor listened to their advice; he publicly went through the vain ceremony of resigning his authority into the hands of the citizens of Padua, as if they had still been free to choose his successor; Francesco Novello was declared lord of the state in his

CHAP. V. PART III.

stead; and he himself immediately withdrew to Treviso, of which he determined to retain the sovereignty.

Conquest and partition of their states.

But this arrangement failed in diverting the enemies of the Carrara from their purpose; and, on the very day on which the elder Francesco retired to Treviso, the heralds of Gian Galeazzo brought a defiance and a declaration of war to his son. The states both of Padua and Treviso were immediately invaded from all points by the troops of the league; panic and treason spread through the cities, the castles, and the camps of the Carrara; and neither father nor son could discover any other mode of escape from the merciless hands of the Venetians, their deadliest foes, than by surrendering the keys of their capitals and fortresses to Jacopo del Verme, the general of Gian Galeazzo, and obtaining a safe conduct for themselves to proceed to Pavia, and implore the generosity of the conqueror. Thus the viper (il biscione) the armorial bearing of the Visconti, —a term which is figuratively used by contemporary chroniclers as the emblem of their power— erected his crest on the shores of the Adriatic. The standards of Gian Galeazzo, which floated over the walls of Padua and her dependant fortresses, might be discerned from the towers of Venice; and when the Paduan deputies knelt in homage before the lord of Milan, he boastfully promised them that, if God only gave him five years of life, he would make the proud senators of Venice their equals, and put an end to the alarm

Alarming power of Gian Galeazzo.

which that amphibious republic had so long occasioned to their city.

While the machinations and arms of Gian Galeazzo had thus dispossessed the houses of Scala and Carrara in succession of their inheritance, his treacherous projects had not been confined to the extension of his dominions in eastern Lombardy. He had already sought another field for his intrigues among the Tuscan states, and had only suspended the prosecution of his designs in that quarter, that he might receive no interruption in the conquest of the Veronese and Paduan lordships. But, in almost all the Tuscan cities, his emissaries were incessantly occupied in exciting troubles by which he might profit for the establishment of his power; and the eternal enmities and dissensions, which filled the republics of that province, afforded him but too many occasions for weaving his toils among them. Florence, ever the enemy of the tyrants of Italy, was as usual the particular object of his hostility, and watchful in observing his motions. Some disputes, which arose between her and Sienna, impelled the people of the latter city to offer their signiory to the lord of Milan for the blind gratification of their animosity; and though the tyrant dissembled for some time, and even concluded an amicable treaty with the Florentines, the continuance of his faithless enterprises at length determined their rulers to prefer open warfare with him to an insidious peace. In this resolution they were imitated by Bologna; and, in less than two

His ambitious designs in Tuscany.

War between Florence and

CHAP. V. PART III.

the lord of Milan, and their allies. 1390.

years after the fall of the Carrara, a general war was kindled in Tuscany. Besides the support of his Lombard allies, the marquis of Este, and Gonzaga lord of Mantua, Visconti had drawn into his party the Tuscan republics of Sienna and Perugia, and all the petty Ghibelin signors of the same province and of Romagna; and the confederates brought into the field in the first campaign fifteen thousand cuirassiers and six thousand foot. The allied republics could not oppose to them nearly the same force; but Florence placed Sir John Hawkwood at the head of an army of two thousand lances, or six thousand cavalry, and Bologna supported a thousand lances. Against this inferior force, however, the numerous array of Visconti and his confederates gained no decisive success. The assailants were scattered round a large circuit of frontier; no great battle was fought; and the war languished in a few incursions and surprises of petty castles, when the attention of both parties was suddenly diverted to the Trevisan March, by the bold enterprise of one man, who by his courage and talents, by the energy of his character, and above all by his hatred of Visconti, proved himself a most efficient ally to Florence.

Fortunes of Francesco Novello da Carrara.

This was Francesco Novello da Carrara, whom Gian Galeazzo had deprived of his father's territories and his own. That tyrant, after violating the safe conduct of the Carrara to his presence, that he might avoid seeing them, had imprisoned the father; and having at first amused the son

through his ministers with the promise of the signiory of Lodi, finally assigned to him in exchange for his ample states the ruined fortalice of Conzon near Asti. At this fief, however, Francesco occupied himself in his fallen fortunes, like a simple châtelain, in rebuilding his castle, until his oppressor drove him even from this retreat. The city of Asti had been ceded by Visconti to the duke of Orleans, who had married his daughter; and the lieutenant who commanded for the duke in the place, conceiving an affection for Carrara, gave him intelligence that Visconti had stationed a band of assassins to waylay and murder him between the city and his castle. He counselled an immediate flight, and Francesco followed his advice. The friendly governor undertook to transport his children and treasure to Florence; and under his escort the persecuted chieftain himself suddenly quitted his castle with his wife and a few faithful servants, announcing his intention to make a pilgrimage to a shrine at Vienne in Dauphiny. From thence he proceeded to Avignon to entreat the counsel and aid of the anti-pope; and then embarked at Marseilles to return to Italy by sea. But the dark machinations of Visconti still pursued him; his course was dogged by the emissaries of the tyrant; he was repeatedly driven on shore by tempests and by the sufferings of his wife, a lady of the house of Este, who was far advanced in her pregnancy; and at every spot where the travellers attempted to land from

CHAP. V. PART III.

their felucca, the myrmidons of Gian Galeazzo beset their path and menaced their lives. It was not until the fugitive signor and his wife had passed through a long series of romantic and touching adventures,* that they at length reached a hospitable asylum beyond the power of their remorseless enemy in the free city of Florence, and found that, by the faithful friendship of the governor of Asti, their family and riches were already sheltered in the same haven.

His mind relieved by the safety of his family, Carrara left Florence to pursue his plans of vengeance against his oppressor, and to encounter a repetition of the dangers which he had escaped. Alternately encouraged and disappointed, as the counsels of Florence wavered between war and peace with Visconti, he wandered in successive journies between Italy and Dalmatia and Germany, until the Florentines had finally resolved on hostilities; and then, having levied forces among some Hungarian chieftains, who were connected by marriage and friendship with his family, and purchased the aid of the duke of Bavaria, who engaged to lead a large army into Italy, he at length suddenly appeared in arms on the Paduan

* The story of their harassing sufferings and "hair-breadth 'scapes," and of the subsequent adventures of Francesco, is told by a contemporary chronicler of Padua, Andrea Gataro, and may be found in the seventeenth volume of Script. Rer. Ital.—The tale is more interesting than any romance, from the simple air of truth which pervades it.

frontiers. His success was rapid and brilliant: the former subjects of his house, already weary of the grievous yoke of the lord of Milan, welcomed him with acclamations, and every where revolted in his favor; the Venetians, awaking to alarm at the power of Visconti, favored him under cover of a strict neutrality; the Milanese generals were compelled to shut themselves up in Padua; and Francesco besieging them there, finally entered the city by surprise, and re-established himself in his capital and in the whole of its dependant territory.

His re-establishment in the lordship of Padua.

The success of Carrara, and the vain efforts which Gian Galeazzo made to recover the Paduan country, operated as a diversion in favor of the Florentines and Bolognese, by removing the principal theatre of hostilities from their territory to eastern Lombardy, or the Trevisan March; and though the duke of Bavaria failed in his engagements and disgracefully suffered himself to be bribed by Visconti, Carrara and his allies succeeded by their incursions into the Modenese state in forcing the marquis of Este to abandon the Milanese alliance. But the languid progress of the war seemed to promise no decisive event; and the Florentines determined by one vigorous effort to bring it if possible to an honorable conclusion. They therefore addressed themselves to the count d' Armagnac, a French prince of high martial reputation, whose family connections rendered him unfriendly to Gian Galeazzo. The sister of d' Armagnac had married a son of Bernabo

Prosecution of the war between Florence and the lord of Milan.

1391

CHAP. V. PART III.

Visconti; and the prince was eagerly besought by this brother-in-law to aid him in avenging his father's murder and recovering his inheritance from Gian Galeazzo. Thus solicited, and tempted by the large subsidies and offers of Florence, d' Armagnac agreed to enter Lombardy with a force of fifteen thousand gens-d' armerie. It was proposed by the council of ten commissioners to whom the management of the war was committed at Florence, that, while the count thus entered the Milanese dominions from France, the troops of their own republic, with those of Bologna and Padua, should invade them simultaneously from the eastward or opposite frontier. Hawkwood was therefore dispatched with his bands from Tuscany to Padua to assume the chief command of the confederates; and having there assembled fourteen hundred lances in Florentine, six hundred in Bolognese, and two hundred in Paduan pay,—in all 6600 cuirassiers—with 1200 cross-bowmen, and a great body of other infantry, the veteran captain advanced into the states of Visconti, and successively crossing the Adige, the Mincio and the Oglio, penetrated triumphantly within fifteen miles of Milan, from which the Adda alone remained to separate him.

Defeat of the count d' Armagnac, the ally of Florence.

But here he was suddenly arrested by the intelligence that the rashness and presumption of d' Armagnac had entailed utter destruction on the numerous and gallant army, which he had selected from the flower of the French chivalry. Gian Galeazzo, who was hopeless of arresting the ad-

vance of the count in the field, had opposed to him the ablest of his generals, Jacopo del Verme, but with a very inferior force of 6000 cuirassiers and 4000 foot. The Milanese leader had shut himself up in Alessandria; and d' Armagnac, instead of turning aside to effect the junction with Hawkwood which had been concerted, proceeded with an utter but misplaced contempt for the Italian chivalry to carry his bravades to the gates of Alessandria with the elite of his followers, leaving the mass of his army some miles in rear. A corresponding body of the Milanese gens-d'armerie sallied out to meet his challenge: but the French chivalry had no sooner bravely dismounted to fight in phalanx on foot, than their adversaries caraçoling round them, drew them off from the spot where their horses were left; and when, harassed by desultory assaults, wearied with marching under the enormous weight of their armour, and overpowered by the dust and the scorching heat of a noon-day sun, their strength had been completely exhausted, Jacopo del Verme placed a second body of his cavalry, which had secretly issued from another gate, between them and their horses, and finally enclosing them with his forces, either slaughtered or captured the whole number including their leader. The French army, thus left in their camp and deprived of their captains, were seized with a panic; and dispersing, were either massacred by the peasantry who occupied all the passes, or compelled to surrender to the Milanese troops their pursuers.

CHAP. V. PART III.

Skilful retreat of Hawkwood.

These disasters placed Hawkwood in the most imminent peril. He was in the heart of an enemy's country: before him, were the whole forces of Milan, victorious and now far superior in numbers, which approached to overpower him, and, in his rear, were three great rivers which he could not hope to pass with impunity in their presence. But the confidence which he felt in the resources of his own genius in no degree abandoned him. After remaining inactive behind his intrenchments, as if paralyzed by terror, until the Milanese, their temerity and carelessness increasing as he tamely received their insults, were thrown off their guard; he suddenly fell upon them with so much impetuosity that he routed them and captured twelve hundred horse. Having thus gained his object of inspiring his enemy with respect, and deterring him from too close a pursuit, Hawkwood commenced a masterly retreat, and had re-passed both the Oglio and Mincio before a single trooper of Gian Galeazzo dared appear on their banks. But he had yet the rapid Adige to cross, and the difficulty was the greater as the enemy had already fortified themselves on the dikes, which confine the waters of that river to its bed. The Lombard plains are almost every where on a lower level than that of the streams which intersect them, and are only preserved from continual inundations by artificial embankments, between which the impetuous torrents that descend from the melting of Alpine snows are securely conducted to the sea. But when

these dikes are burst or cut, the adjacent plains are at once flooded. Hawkwood, on reaching the range of low land which is known as the Veronese valley, found the Adige, the Po, and the Polesino before him on the north, the south, and the west, and Jacopo del Verme hanging on his rear; and in this situation, the enemy suddenly cut the dikes of the Adige, and let the river loose from its bed upon him. The lower ground about the Florentine camp was at once inundated. As far as the eye could stretch, the country in every direction but one was converted into a vast lake of hourly increasing depth; the waters even menaced the rising spot on which the army lay; provisions began to fail; and Jacopo del Verme, his whole force guarding the only outlet, sent, by a trumpet, a fox enclosed in a cage to the English captain. Hawkwood received the taunting present with dry composure, and bade the messenger tell his general, that his fox appeared nothing sad, and doubtless knew by what door he would quit his cage.

A leader of less courageous enterprise and skilful resource than Hawkwood might have despaired of bursting from the toils; but the wily veteran knew both how to inspire his troops with unlimited confidence in his guidance, and to avail himself of their devotion. Leaving his tents standing, he silently and boldly led his cavalry before day-light into the inundated plain towards the Adige; and, with the waters already at the horses' girths, marched the whole of the same

day and the following night beside the dikes of that river; until he found a spot where its bed had been left dry by the escape of the waters; and crossing it at length gave repose to his wearied troops on the Paduan frontiers. Part of his infantry had perished, and he had lost many men and horses in the mud, and in canals and ditches, the danger of which could not be distinguished amidst the general inundation; but the army of the league was saved, and Jacopo del Verme dared not pursue its hazardous retreat.

The subsequent operations of Hawkwood were marked with equal ability, but their event was indecisive; and there appears to me nothing worth recounting in this war after his celebrated and skilful retreat. * By the mediation of Genoa,

* This war closed the exploits of "our honest countryman" as Forsyth ironically calls the great condottiere. I know not, however, why he charges Hawkwood with "traitorously selling to Florence the Pisans who paid him to defend them." The reproach rests on no authority which I can discover; and, in the war between the two republics (which ended in 1364), he was, on the contrary, the only one of the mercenary leaders in Pisan pay who was not debauched by the Florentines, but continued to serve his masters faithfully to the end of the contest. Though doubtless not altogether exempt from the vices of his rapacious and cruel trade, Hawkwood was as superior to the condottieri of his times in general character as in military genius. His last years at least were devoted with honorable fidelity to the Florentines, and his eminent services merited the monument which still remains in the cathedral of Florence,—a record of their gratitude, though not, as Mr. Forsyth has supposed, of his treason. He died a natural death in 1394 at an estate which he had purchased in the Florentine territory, and was honored with a magnificent funeral by the republic.

a peace was concluded in the following year. Its provisions left Francesco Novello da Carrara in quiet possession of the lordship of Padua which he had so gallantly recovered; but Treviso had remained, since the partition treaty with Visconti, with the Venetians, and the old signor, his father, shortly died in the prisons of the lord of Milan before the adjustment of his ransom could be effected. Gian Galeazzo and the Florentines mutually engaged to abstain from interference, he in the affairs of Tuscany, and they in those of Lombardy. But in negociating this treaty, the remaining conditions of which were unimportant, the Florentines reposed no trust in their faithless enemy; and when the arbiters of the peace spoke of sureties for its maintenance, "Our surety," said a Florentine commissioner, "shall be in the sword, for the lord of Milan has put our forces to proof, and we have tried his."

Peace of Genoa. 1392

Perfidious character and intrigues of Gian Galeazzo Visconti.

The Florentines had full reason to keep an eye of suspicion and alarm upon the movements of Visconti; and they had leisure to perceive, in the course of the few following years, that even a state of avowed hostility, with an enemy so perfidious and restless, was less pregnant with danger than a hollow and faithless peace. Personally unwarlike and pusillanimous, Gian Galeazzo seldom ventured to pass the circuit of his strongly fortified palace at Pavia; but by his numerous agents and emissaries his intrigues dived into the inmost counsels of every state, and his machinations against the general independence of the peninsula were in-

CHAP. V. PART III.

cessant and too extensively successful. The immense revenues, which he exacted from his subjects, were spent in strengthening his mischievous power; almost all the most celebrated condottieri and their bands were attached to his service; and, as he allowed them a constant half-pay, they were still at his command even while he appeared to give them a formal discharge. He thus turned them loose to subsist by the plunder and ravaging of other states, and left them to rob and exhaust those during peace, against whom he meditated more overt attacks. No oaths or solemn treaties bound him; no crime deterred him; neither remorse nor compunction turned him from the pursuit of the most flagitious enterprises. In the midst of every disappointment and difficulty, he could still command the same calm dissimulation, the same unshaken constancy of purpose; and though his cautious timidity sometimes prevented him from reaping the full measure of opportunity, a watchfulness that never slumbered, and a plausibility of profession which no exposure could shame, rendered him supreme in duplicity even among the wily politicians of Italy. Therefore it was that his negociations and plots were infinitely more to be dreaded than his arms; and though the Florentines perfectly understood his character, and had alone the courage to offer an habitual resistance to his arts, they were not the less exposed to the effects of his perfidy.

The fall of Pisa under the dominion of a creature of Visconti offered the first new cause of

alarm to the Florentines. Notwithstanding the engagement into which the tyrant had entered not to interfere in the affairs of Tuscany, he secretly instigated the treason of Jacopo d' Appiano, a man of base extraction who had been raised to the office of chancellor of the Pisan republic by the friendship of Piero Gambacorti, the chief of the ruling faction. Gambacorti, a citizen of moderation and virtue, had long governed that republic by the annual renewal of his office of captain general; but though his own disinterestedness and simplicity of manners endeared him to the people, the pride and insolence of his family excited universal disgust, and filled the citizens with the apprehension of an hereditary tyranny. But Gambacorti himself might have preserved his credit with his countrymen to the natural close of a long and honorable life, if he had not reposed confidence in an ungrateful traitor. Appiano, with the connivance of the lord of Milan, secretly assembled numerous armed ruffians from various quarters, excited a furious sedition in the city under pretence of revenging a private quarrel, and basely assassinating his benefactor in the tumult, seized the reins of government. Gian Galeazzo immediately dispatched troops to his support, and under their protection Appiano firmly established himself in the signiory. Before this revolution Visconti had already shewn his continued hostility against Florence, by instigating several bodies of disbanded mercenaries, who had formed companies of adventure, to attack

CHAP. V. PART III.

the territory of the republic; but the firm countenance of the state repressed these incursions. About the same time, too, he carried his intrigues into the reigning families of Ferrara and Mantua. In the first of these houses he encouraged a disputed succession, in the hope of profiting by a civil war; and, in the second, he persuaded Francesco Gonzaga, by a devilish plot, of the infidelity of his lady, the daughter of Bernabo Visconti, whose enmity he dreaded as the murderer of her father. The lord of Mantua put his guiltless wife to death; and, when he discovered her innocence too late, and was stung by remorse and fired with indignation against the fiend who had deceived him, Gian Galeazzo finding his alliance lost, was the first to accuse him of the murder of his lady, and thenceforth took every occasion to injure him without an open violation of peace. In the midst of this course of ambition and crime, the power and dignity of the tyrant received a new increase. By the payment of 100,000 florins, he induced the feeble Wenceslaus, who now reigned in Germany as king of the Romans and emperor elect, to raise Milan and its dependancies into an imperial duchy, and to bestow on him the solemn investiture of this fief. Thus he in some measure seemed to acquire a recognized right over his dominions, and to remove the long stain of usurpation which had humbled his ancestors and himself before the legitimate dynasties of Europe. Such had been the gradual progress of the overwhelming tyranny

Erection of Milan into an imperial duchy. 1395

of his house, that the cities which were now embraced in the imperial duchy of Milan, were precisely those which, two centuries before, had comprised the league of Lombardy, and triumphantly conquered their freedom from Frederic Barbarossa.

New war between Florence and the duke of Milan.

The few years of feverish anxiety, which the Florentine government had passed since their last war, were shortly to terminate in another struggle with the new duke of Milan. Notwithstanding the little fruit derived by the republic from a treaty of alliance which she negociated with the king of France, she had already prepared for a renewal of her contest with Gian Galeazzo, when a treacherous attempt of some of the condottieri, whom he had formally disbanded, but who were notoriously under his influence, to seize upon the little city of San Miniato, the 1397
subject-ally of Florence, hastened their resolution, and even denied them the option of peace. For Alberic di Barbiano, the chief of these condottieri, on the failure of the enterprise against San Miniato, united the troops of the duke of Milan in the Siennese and Pisan territories to his bands, and thus forming an army of above ten thousand cuirassiers, began to act openly against Florence as the general of Gian Galeazzo, though without any declaration of war. At the same time two other Milanese armies, on the distant side of Lombardy, broke into the Mantuan territory and ravaged it, also without the usual prelude of honorable hostilities. The war now be-

CHAP. V. PART III.

came general in the Mantuan district. The Florentines, besides defending themselves, sent succours to Gonzaga; the marquis Nicholas III. of Este and the lord of Padua openly assisted him; and Carrara, notwithstanding the ancient quarrel of the Venetians with his father, having succeeded by friendly and submissive overtures, soon after his restoration, in reconciling himself with them, the aid of their republic was indirectly given in concert with his. With the support of all these auxiliaries, Francesco Gonzaga gained a great battle against the Milanese troops near the castle of Governolo. But Venice, though she was alarmed at the increasing power of the duke of Milan, and had now committed herself with him, was still fearful of declaring openly against him, and anxiously sought to re-establish the peace of Lombardy. She therefore offered her mediation to the belligerents; but so interminable were the frauds and deceptions of Gian Galeazzo that, after eight months of negociation, all hopes of a definitive peace were renounced, and the good offices of Venice could produce no more than a truce for ten years under her guarantee.

Terminated by a truce. 1398

Successful machinations of Gian Galeazzo.

This imperfect pacification only afforded Gian Galeazzo the greater opportunity and leisure to extend his intrigues. His support of Jacopo d'Appiano, the tyrant of Pisa, and his insidious alliance with Sienna against Florence, had given him an alarming influence over both those states; and this he now found means to convert into an absolute sovereignty. During the life of Jacopo

d' Appiano, who was at a very advanced age when he usurped the signiory of Pisa, Gian Galeazzo had already made one treacherous effort to gain possession of the Pisan castles by means of the troops whom he had sent to the support of his creature; and when Appiano discovered and defeated this project, he impudently disclaimed all knowledge of it, and bade the Pisan signor punish the Milanese general and soldiery, and their accomplices in the city, who had fallen into his hands; as if they had acted without his knowledge or approbation. By this artful conduct the duke lulled the suspicions of his dependant, and the death of Jacopo shortly enabled him to seize on the signiory of Pisa by a treaty with the feeble son of that usurper. Finding himself unequal to the preservation of his father's power, Gerardo d' Appiano sold the republic to Gian Galeazzo for 200,000 florins and the signiory of Piombino and the island of Elba—possessions which the family of Appiano were destined to hold for two centuries. Several thousand of the ducal troops were suddenly admitted into Pisa; the chains of the fallen republic were rivetted; and her citizens hopeless of successful resistance were compelled to receive a Milanese governor. Thus successful in enslaving one of the principal republics of Tuscany, the perfidious duke seemed to draw the minor states of the province into the vortex of his despotism, as if by the exercise of some mysterious and potent spell over their counsels. In the same year which planted his standards at

Pisa, subjected to his yoke. 1399

CHAP. V. PART III.

Pisa, the Ubertini and other Ghibelin feudatories who held petty mountain fiefs delivered themselves over to his sovereignty; and afterwards the republics of Sienna and Perugia, ravaged by the continued incursions of condottieri, torn by their own factions, and filled with his emissaries, voluntarily called him in for their lord, declared their signiory hereditary in his family, and exchanged their uneasy freedom for his powerful protection and despotic authority. Thus the Florentines found Gian Galeazzo extending his conquests all around their territory. On the side of the Tuscan plains, the viper of Milan was crested on the towers of Pisa, Sienna, and Perugia, cities that had lately been free as their own: from the mountains that overhung their frontier a new storm was gathering in the hostility of the Ghibelin chieftains of the Apennines, who had chosen the Milanese duke for their sovereign. Entirely encompassed by enemies, the Florentines might justly tremble for their own independence, in the defence of which they vainly looked around for assistance.

The signiory of Sienna and Perugia surrendered to him.

But the moral desolation in which they were left was even more appalling than the palpable danger of their territorial position. The spirit of freedom seemed to approach its extinction throughout Italy. Of all the inland republics of the peninsula, none besides their own remained to pretend to freedom but Lucca and Bologna; and both these cities were a prey to violent commotions and intrigues which but too surely por-

Decline of the spirit of freedom.

tended the establishment of tyrannies in each. In fact, in less than two years after the subjection of Pisa to Gian Galeazzo, both Lucca and Bologna had submitted to domestic tyrants. Of the maritime republics, Genoa had already, as we shall presently find, surrendered herself to a foreign sovereign; and Venice, inactive in the security of her lagunes, and not daring to rouze herself to stem the progress of the Milanese power, abandoned Italy to her fate. The prostration of the peninsula before one universal tyranny in the person of Gian Galeazzo seemed at hand; and amidst the gloomy forebodings which his overwhelming power was calculated to excite, and the horrors of the pestilence which had just recommenced its cruel ravages, the fourteenth century closed over Italy. *

Italy in danger of falling under the universal tyranny of the duke of Milan.

REVOLUTIONS OF GENOA. 1350—1400

To lessen as much as possible the distractions necessarily entailed on the reader by the numerous transitions in our subject, I have hitherto almost entirely abstained from noticing the domestic history of Genoa during the period embraced in the present chapter; and I have been enabled to reserve the internal affairs of this

* My principal authorities, for this period between the accession of Gian Galeazzo to the lordship of Milan and the close of the fourteenth century, are the laborious compilations of Muratori (A. D. 1378—1400.) and Sismondi (vol. vii. cc. 42—45, pp. 260—412.) But I have also consulted with care the Paduan chronicle of Andrea Gataro (Scrip. Rer. Ital. vol. xvii. pp. 446—858 passim) before cited,—the perusal of whose prolix narrative, amusing though it be, is in itself no slight task—and Poggio Bracciolini, Istor. Fiorent. b. iii. ad p. 280.

maritime republic for a brief and separate notice, because they have little connection with the general history of Italy. The revolution of 1339, which produced the first appointment of a doge at Genoa, had a farther and even more important influence upon the subsequent condition of the state. By the exclusion from authority of the old nobility, it paved the way, as a similar vicissitude had done at Florence, for the elevation of a plebeian and commercial aristocracy. An order of wealthy commoners arose, who in dignity and physical strength, in the extent of their property and the number of their retainers, and even in the martial spirit of their characters and the deadly feuds which divided them, emulated the power and the pride of the ancient families. Thus the new houses of Adorno and Guarco, of Montalto and Fregoso, moved in a distinct and parallel course with the Grimaldi and Fieschi, the Spinola and Doria. Eagerly seizing an occasion for hatred of each other in the distinction of Guelfs and Ghibelins, these merchant-nobles agreed only in common animosity against the old aristocracy. A sufficient idea of the different position of these two orders in the state may be gathered from observing the sources of their power. The old aristocracy were supported by their vassals, the peasantry of the fiefs in the Ligurian mountains which they held with their castles: the merchant-nobles numbered their retainers among the seamen and artificers of the capital. Personally engaged in the active busi-

Rise of the commercial aristocracy.

ness of their commerce, they embarked in their own vessels which were fitted at once for war and trade; the numerous members of the same family often commanded each his galley, and lived among his mariners; and thus thousands of sailors and workmen were maintained in the pay of the same house, and bound by the common ties of affection and interest to their employers. In a free and maritime state, the relation between patron and client constituted a formidable bond of union, and rendered the commercial orders more than a match for the rural proprietors and their followers.

Recovery of the republic from the Milanese yoke.

We have seen how the Genoese were reduced after their defeat by the Venetians, in the naval battle of Loiéra, in 1353, to consign the signiory of their republic to the archbishop Giovanni Visconti, lord of Milan. But as soon as the pressure of the Venetian war had ceased, the high-spirited people indignantly supported the onerous yoke of Milan, to which their blind hatred and momentary dread of their maritime rivals had induced them rashly to submit; and, after impatiently enduring the government of the Visconti for about three years, they rose in arms, expelled the Milanese governor and garrison, and recalled their doge 1356
Simone Boccanigra, the same whom they had originally raised to that dignity in 1339. From this period Boccanigra exercised his limited and temperate authority for the public honor and happiness to the close of his life. But on his death, which was not without suspicion of having 1363

CHAP. V. PART III. REVOLUTIONS OF GENOA. 1350—1400

been caused by poison at a banquet given by the state to the king of Cyprus, a popular commotion arose, and occasioned the tumultuary election of Gabriello Adorno for his successor.

Struggles of faction.

Thus commenced a long and obstinate struggle between the two parties, at the head of which the new families of wealthy commoners had placed themselves.* It was the preponderance of the Guelf faction which raised Adorno to the ducal throne; and two years later, after a violent contest, the Ghibelins with their leader, Leonardo di Montalto, were expelled from the city, and immediately waged a civil war against their country. Pope Urban VI. temporarily appeased these furious dissensions; but they shortly broke forth again with redoubled virulence; and Gabriello Adorno had only retained his seat for seven years, when a popular insurrection hurled him from power and placed on his throne Domeneco Fregoso, who had succeeded Montalto in the direction of the Ghibelin party. Both Adorno and Fregoso governed the state in turn with talent and vigour equal to their ambition; but both shared the same fate. Fregoso was deposed by the tumultuous voice of the people; and the usual oscillation of parties gave the ducal chair to the faction opposed to that of the last doge, and

1365

1378

* Sismondi in two different places, (vol. vii. p. 17. and 240.) has curiously confused the politics of the principal merchant-nobles, and contradicted himself; but it is difficult to avoid being bewildered in studying distinctions of faction, which were regulated, not by any intelligible principle, but by mere words.

seated in it Nicola di Guarco, one of the leaders of the Guelfs. It was under the dogeship of Guarco that the war of Chiozza was so gloriously maintained; and his patriotic zeal to augment the public force induced him to recall the ancient nobility to power, and to unite them in the cause of their country by entrusting the fleets and armies of the republic to their conduct. The courage and devotion of the old aristocracy justified his confidence; but the war was no sooner terminated than the long jealousy of the plebeians against the ancient houses awakened afresh; an alarming sedition was begun by the butchers of Genoa; and after the usual process of insurrection the nobles were again excluded from power, and the doge himself obliged to consult his safety by flight. 1383

Incessant revolutions and exhaustion of the republic.

In their common animosity against the old nobility, the Guelf and Ghibelin parties, into which the great commoners and the people were divided, had momentarily forgotten their own factious quarrel, and united in effecting this revolution. Antoniotto Adorno, who had inherited his father's influence with the Guelfs, and Leonardo Montalto and Pietro Fregoso who swayed the Ghibelins, had coalesced to overthrow the doge; but the ambitious rivalry of these leaders immediately revived with their success, and the state narrowly escaped a civil war in the struggle of Adorno and Montalto for the ducal dignity. The latter prevailed, but closed his magistracy and his life in the following year; and Adorno

CHAP. V. PART III. REVOLUTIONS OF GENOA. 1350—1400

was then chosen to succeed him by the unanimous suffrages of the people. From this epoch the revolutions of Genoa became so frequent and numerous that it is impossible—and would be utterly useless if it were otherwise—for us to attempt to trace their course. The deep exhaustion in which the republic had been left by the war of Chiozza was fatally visible in the apathy and decay of her influence in foreign affairs, but seemed only to aggravate her paroxysms of internal violence, and to multiply the incurable factions which consumed her. The four great houses of the old nobility were almost always in arms against the public peace at their rural fiefs; the great commoners with their clients kept the capital in a ferment by their bitter animosities, and found it, under the senseless distinction of the Guelf and Ghibelin name, but too easy to influence the passions of the people; and, besides these turbulent rivals, a new and lower party among the commercial citizens, that of the middle estate as it was called, reared its baleful head. Four times, amidst the shock of these contending factions, was Antoniotto Adorno alternately elevated to the ducal throne and expelled from his seat; and ten times in four years were the doges changed by the violence and shifting affections of the wayward and capricious people. Only one consummation of ill was wanting to the public afflictions,—the insidious interference of a foreign tyrant; and, while Gian Galeazzo Visconti reigned in the peninsula, that evil was ever impending, to exercise its fatal

1390—1394

influence upon the disorders of the state. The perfidious ruler of Milan called himself the friend of Adorno, and assisted him in his alternations of adversity. But his succours were even more dangerous than his enmity; his real design was to reduce Genoa to the extremity of weakness that he might recover the authority which his great-uncle the archbishop of Milan had acquired over her; and Adorno discovered immediately after his last restoration to the ducal throne, which was effected by Milanese aid, that Gian Galeazzo was already actively intriguing with his enemies to dethrone him.

This exposure of the baseness of his ally seems at once to have extinguished or purified the hitherto inordinate ambition of Adorno; and conscious that the republic was already too much enfeebled to resist the dangerous machinations of the tyrant, he voluntarily determined to lay down his own power that he might at least secure to her the option of a master. Charles VI., then king of France, was too powerful in appearance for Visconti to hazard a rupture with him, and yet too feeble in character for Genoa to apprehend his usurpation of a more absolute authority than she was contented to entrust to him. He was therefore a desirable, because not personally a dangerous protector; and Adorno concluded a treaty with the French king, by which the signiory of Genoa was consigned to that monarch with every careful reservation of her internal freedom. The doge descended to a private station in which

Surrender of the state to the protection of Charles VI. of France. 1396

CHAP. V. PART III.

REVOLUTIONS OF GENOA. 1350—1400

he soon after died; a French vicar was admitted into the capital; and French garrisons were permitted in several of the dependant fortresses. But the Genoese were too impatient and fickle to endure this compact, formed as it was to guard, without injuring, their freedom; the French lieutenants were strangers to constitutional forms; and, after only two years of tranquillity, new troubles broke out. A furious insurrection ended
1398 only in increasing the power of Charles; and after Genoa had suffered so severely in the struggle, that thirty of her most sumptuous palaces were demolished and the property of individuals in the city destroyed to the value of a million of florins, the party which supported the authority of the French finally prevailed. *

AFFAIRS OF NAPLES. 1350—1400

For many years after the pacification which Joanna, queen of Naples, succeeded in effecting in 1351 with Louis, king of Hungary, there is little either in her history or that of her kingdom to demand our attention. Her second husband, Louis of Tarento, shared her power with the royal title; but, after displaying in the outset some appearance of vigour and activity of character, he neglected the charge of his kingdom to plunge into a career of dissipation and sensuality which brought his life to a premature close. Louis and his queen had been invited by one of the factions which desolated Sicily to un-

Continuation of the reign of Joanna.

* Georgii Stellæ, Annales Genuens. pp. 1092 — 1154, passim. Sismondi, vols. vi. and vii.

dertake an expedition into that island; and the disorders and weakness which attended the minority of its sovereign of the Aragonese dynasty, might have afforded an easy occasion of re-uniting its crown to that of Naples. But the opportunity

Condition of Sicily.*

* The condition of Sicily, from the middle to the close of the fourteenth century, has so little interesting connection with the history of Italy that, without interrupting the course of my text, I may be allowed to dispatch a short notice of the affairs of that island in a note.—After the death of Frederic II. (the first of that name of the Aragonese dynasty) who so gallantly maintained the independence of his people against the papal and Angevin power; Sicily was agitated by a long series of ruinous disorders, which were produced, or rendered more fatal, by a succession of feeble princes. The Chiaramonti, the most powerful family among the nobility, possessed themselves of a moiety of the kingdom, and established a kind of independent faction, always in opposition to the throne, and sometimes in concert with the sovereigns of Naples. Peter II. succeeded his father Frederic, as I have formerly observed, in 1337 and died prematurely in 1342, leaving his infant son Louis to inherit his throne at the age of only five years. His disastrous minority was only just terminating, when it was followed by a second. He died in 1355, leaving his throne to devolve upon his brother Frederic III., a boy of thirteen years old. It was at this epoch that Joanna and her husband were invited into Sicily; but, after the failure of the Neapolitan expedition, Frederic reigned undisturbed for above twenty years. In 1363, however, he engaged by a treaty with Joanna to do homage to her for the kingdom of Sicily, to pay a tribute, and to assume only the title of king of Trinacria; but none of these conditions appear to have been complied with, and he and his successors always entitled themselves king of Sicily, with the addition of *ultra Pharum*, to distinguish it from the kingdom of Naples, or Sicily *citra Pharum*. Frederic died in 1377; and the union of his daughter Maria with Martin, son of the king of Aragon, raised her consort to the Sicilian throne. She died before him without issue, and bequeathed to him her crown, which he still wore when the fifteenth century commenced.

was lost; either by the voluptuous indolence of Louis, or the troubles excited in the Neapolitan states by the princes of the blood, his relatives, of the houses of Durazzo and Tarento, whom the king of Hungary released from captivity in his dominions soon after his peace with Joanna. The distractions entailed on Naples by the private wars of these princes with each other, and by their rebellions against the crown, were aggravated by the ravages of the great company of adventure; and the feeble husband of Joanna, instead of repulsing these freebooters by arms, disgracefully purchased their retreat by heavy contributions. In the same year with his death, the queen married
1362 for the third time. The new object of her choice was James, prince of Majorca, who obtained her hand upon condition that he should neither assume the title of king, nor interfere in the administration of her government; but this union was scarcely more fortunate for Joanna than those which had preceded it. Shortly after his marriage, James received intelligence that his father, the king of Majorca, had been treacherously seized and murdered by the king of Aragon; and he immediately left Naples for Spain to attempt to revenge his death and recover his inheritance. He was taken prisoner in the wars of the Spanish peninsula; and it was to no purpose that Joanna paid an immense sum for his ransom. He only returned to Naples to collect supplies for a second expedition against Aragon, in the course of which
1365 he died.

Joanna passed several years in her third widowhood in tranquillity; which was undisturbed by any remarkable event; but the succession of her kingdom occupied her with a new source of inquietude. Her own children had died in infancy; and, of the numerous males of the royal family of Naples, a series of deaths had left only one: a second Charles of Durazzo, nephew of the former prince whom we have known under the same name. According to the principles of hereditary right, however, Louis king of Hungary had certainly a prior claim to the Neapolitan crown to Joanna herself; and the nieces of the queen, daughters of her sister, were also more nearly allied to her throne than Charles of Durazzo. But Joanna seems to have acted in consonance with the loosely defined opinions of the age, in considering or adopting Charles as her presumptive heir; and she gave him the hand of Margaret, one of her nieces. These measures produced the most disastrous results for her. Charles of Durazzo had been invited by the old king of Hungary to reside at his court; in that warlike school, among a brave and hardy nobility, he had learned to despise the luxurious effeminacy of his native country; and he had probably been inspired by Louis and his Hungarians, who had not forgotten the fate of their prince Andrew, with their ancient aversion for Joanna. Deprived of the presence and support of her destined successor, whose ability and courage might have upheld the throne which he was to inherit, and oppressed by new

Charles of Durazzo adopted by Joanna for her successor.

CHAP. V. PART III. AFFAIRS OF NAPLES. 1350—1400

disorders in her kingdom, Joanna, at the age of forty-nine years, took for her protector and fourth husband, Otho of Brunswick, a German prince of amiable character, who had long resided in Italy as the guardian of the young marquis of Montferrat. This marriage — by which the queen, however, did not raise Otho to the royal dignity — alarmed and offended Charles of Durazzo; and the part which Joanna shortly afterwards took in the great schism of the church, afforded him an opportunity of openly declaring against her.

1376

His rupture with her,

And enterprise against her throne in concert with Urban VI.

In the secession of the cardinals after the election of Urban VI., the queen had permitted them to elect Clement VII. in her dominions; she had promised the anti-pope succour; and had granted him an asylum in her capital, until he was terrified by the disaffection of the people into a flight from thence to Avignon. Urban VI. was impelled by these hostile acts to display all the natural violence of his temper against Joanna; he pronounced a sentence of deposition against her; and, aware of her breach with Charles of Durazzo, he offered that prince the investiture of her kingdom. Durazzo gladly closed with his proposal; and Joanna, who was almost defenceless against the rebellion of Charles and the machinations of Urban, looked anxiously round for foreign assistance. By making choice of a French prince for her successor, she hoped to obtain the protection of France, and the services of the chivalrous nobility of that country; and revoking her adoption of Durazzo, she transferred it by

1380

letters patent to Louis, duke of Anjou, the eldest uncle of Charles VI. and regent for that monarch in his minority. Meanwhile Charles of Durazzo was assembling an army against her. The old king of Hungary afforded him powerful aid; and his alliance with Urban VI. disposed the people of Naples, whose prejudices sided with the Italian against the French pope, to favor his enterprise. After exacting from Durazzo the promise of a principality for his nephew in the Neapolitan dominions, Urban solemnly bestowed the crown of the Sicilies upon him at Rome with the title of Charles III.; and, this ceremony concluded, the pretender immediately passed the frontiers of Naples with a powerful army. The Neapolitans either from cowardice, or disaffection, or both, made no resistance to his advance, and even welcomed his approach; the queen possessed neither an army nor the funds for levying mercenary forces; and Otho of Brunswick, who performed the part of an able and valiant soldier, was deserted by his few followers and taken prisoner.—His illfated consort was then compelled to surrender to the victor in her capital.

Adoption of the duke of Anjou by Joanna.

1381

Conquest of Naples by Charles of Durazzo.

Having seized the kingdom and secured the person of the queen, Durazzo endeavoured to complete the work of the sword by requiring her to execute a solemn deed of abdication in his favor. But in her extremity, and with the certainty of death before her, Joanna displayed a heroism worthy of her descent from a long line of illustrious ancestors. She pretended compliance

with the demands of Durazzo, and he accordingly introduced some Provençal barons to her prison to hear her transfer their allegiance to his person; but they were no sooner admitted than she solemnly enjoined them never to acknowledge for their lord the ungrateful robber who from a queen had made her a captive slave; if ever it should be told them that she had constituted him her heir to believe it not; and to hold any deed that might be shewn to that effect as forged or enforced upon her. She added her will that they should own for their lord, Louis of Anjou, whom she appointed her successor and champion to revenge the treason and violence committed against her; and she bade them take no more thought for her, but to perform her funeral obsequies, and to pray for her soul. She was shortly afterwards put to death in prison by command of Durazzo: in what manner is differently related. The common story is that she was smothered with a pillow; but there seems strong reason for believing the account of the secretary of Urban VI., who was at Naples at the time, that four Hungarian soldiers were secretly introduced into the castle of Muro where she was confined, and, entering its chapel while she was kneeling before the altar, strangled her with a silken cord.

Murder of Joanna. 1382

Expedition of Louis of Anjou into Naples.

The quarter from whence Joanna had sought protection in her distress, proved too remote to avert her fate. But, though Louis duke of Anjou, her adopted son, had been unable to appear in Italy in time for her relief, he prepared

nevertheless to avenge her murder and possess himself of her bequests. His authority was acknowledged without opposition in the Provençal dominions of the unhappy queen; but the kingdom of Naples was now entirely subject to Charles III., and the French prince resolved to wrest it from him by force of arms. He descended into Italy with a fine army, composed of the ardent chivalry of France, and amounting at the most moderate computation to 15,000 men-at-arms, besides their followers, while many contemporary writers rate it at four times that force. On the entrance of Louis into the Abruzzos, he was immediately joined by those among the Neapolitan nobles, who had been attached to the late queen, or were moved to indignation and pity by her murder. The usual inconstancy of the feudal barons gave him other adherents, who forsook Charles III. upon various causes of disgust; and altogether the Sanseverini—the most powerful family among the Neapolitan chieftains—with a large proportion of the nobility, raised the Angevin standards. Thus commenced the pretensions of the second line of Anjou to the Neapolitan crown, and the long contest for its possession which was to cost so much bloodshed to the kingdom. The splendid armament, however, which Louis had led from France by some unaccountable mischance failed of assuring him success; no battle was fought; Charles III. cautiously remained on the defensive; and so silently did the French forces waste by the effects of climate and scarcity, that when Louis himself died, about two years after

1382

His failure,

and death.

CHAP. V. PART III. AFFAIRS OF NAPLES. 1350—1400 Reign of Charles III.

his entrance into the kingdom, his army dispersed of itself.

As long as Louis of Anjou lived, Charles III. carefully maintained his relations of amity with Urban VI., who had established his residence at Naples; but the king was no sooner released from apprehension by the death of his rival, than he resolved no longer to submit to the arrogant bearing and insolent violence of the pontiff. He also refused to observe his promise of investing the nephew of Urban with a Neapolitan principality; and the quarrel between these former confederates proceeded to such extremities, that the troops of Charles at last besieged the pope in the castle of Nocera, whither he had retired. Urban then threw himself into the arms of the Angevin party, and was delivered from his besiegers by the forces of some barons of that faction; but he immediately escaped to Genoa, and his flight itself rescued Charles from the dangerous vicinity of such an enemy. In the weakness of the Angevin party, Charles with the vigour which marked his character might easily have crushed that faction for ever, if his insatiable ambition had not lured him into Hungary, in pursuit of the crown of that kingdom, before he had finally secured the tranquillity of the throne on which he was already seated. The aged Louis of Hungary had died in the same year with the murder of Joanna, leaving no other child than a youthful daughter under the guardianship of his widow; and the government of the queen-mother and of Nicholas Gara, her favorite, became so obnoxious

to a part of the Hungarian nobility, that they invited Charles III., the last male relative of their late sovereign, and who had won their affections during his long residence among them, to receive the crown of their country. Notwithstanding his obligations to his benefactor Louis, Charles did not hesitate treacherously to despoil his orphan daughter. He passed into Hungary with the ostensible purpose of protecting the two queens and pacifying the kingdom; and thus admitted into their counsels without suspicion, he obliged them to abdicate in his favor, and succeeded in obtaining the unanimous suffrages of the nobles for his own elevation to the throne. But the royal mother and daughter had only opposed to Charles a dissimulation equal to his own: they meditated a ferocious vengeance for his perfidy, and inviting him to an amicable and private interview in their palace, into which assassins had secretly been introduced, they suddenly caused him to be murdered before their eyes.

His attempt to seize the crown of Hungary. 1385

And murder. 1386

The death of Charles III. involved the kingdom of Naples in the most ruinous anarchy; and delivered it for many years a prey to all the disorders of a long minority and a disputed throne. Charles had left two children, Ladislaus, a boy of ten years old, and a daughter, Joanna; and his widow Margaret acted as regent for her son. On the other hand, the Sanseverini and other baronial families, rallying the Angevin party, proclaimed the young son of the late duke of Anjou

Civil wars in Naples between the parties of Anjou and Durazzo.

CHAP. V. PART III.

king,—also under the guardianship of his mother, Maria—by the title of Louis II. Thus Naples was disturbed by the rival pretensions of two boys, placed beneath the guidance of ambitious and intriguing mothers, and severally protected by two popes, who excommunicated each other, and laboured to crush the minors whom they respectively opposed, only that they might establish their own authority over the party which they supported. Amidst the general confusion, all the barons of the kingdom rose in arms and enjoyed a license for the commission of every crime, under pretence of upholding the cause of the sovereign, to whom they chose at the moment to declare their shifting allegiance. We shall find little temptation to linger over the vicissitudes of so perplexed and uninteresting a contest. For several years the Angevin party seemed to maintain the ascendancy. Louis II. was withheld in Provence from the scene of danger by his mother; but the barons who had raised his standard, forcing Margaret of Durazzo and the adherents of her son to retire to Gaeta, possessed themselves of the capital and great part of the kingdom.

Louis II. (of Anjou)

When Louis II., therefore, was at length suffered by his mother to appear at Naples, attended by a powerful fleet and a numerous train of the warlike

1390

nobles of France, he disembarked at the capital amidst the acclamations of his people, and would probably have overpowered the party of Durazzo with ease, if, as he advanced towards manhood,

he had displayed any energy of character. But he proved very unequal, by his indolence and love of pleasure, to contend with the son of Charles III. Educated in the midst of alarms and danger, and surrounded from his infancy by civil wars and conspiracies, Ladislaus had early been exercised in courageous enterprise and trained to intrigue and dissimulation. At the age of sixteen, his mother Margaret committed him to the barons of her party to make his first essay in arms; and from this period he was ever at the head of his troops, and engaged in promoting his interests by perfidious negociations; while his rival was immersed in voluptuous pleasures. A fortunate marriage, which his mother had effected for him with Constance di Clermont, the heiress of the most opulent noble of Sicily, increased his resources by an immense dowry; and while he made an able use of these riches,* the new Italian

Ladislaus (son of Charles III.)—His character and success against his rival.

* Ladislaus shortly repaid his queen Constance, for the success to which his marriage with her had so much contributed, with signal ingratitude. Notwithstanding her youth, beauty, and virtues, which rendered her the idol of his court and people, and her passionate attachment to himself, he became indifferent to her attractions and desirous of forming a new matrimonial alliance. When, therefore, he had consumed her fortune, and the death of her father left him nothing to hope or to dread from his influence in Sicily, he obtained in 1392 a papal bull from Boniface IX. to annul his union with her; and he even placed her in a confinement, from which he only released her, three years afterwards, to compel her to marry count Andrea of Capua, one of his favorites. When Constance was dragged to the altar by this nobleman, she said to him in presence of the assembled court and

CHAP. V. PART III.

pope, Boniface IX., the successor of Urban VI., recognized him for the legitimate son and vassal of the church, because Louis was supported by the Avignon pontiff. This decision gained him many partizans; the people, besides, saw in him the only descendant of their ancient monarchs; his talents and valour hourly advanced his success; and at last the Sanseverini and all the barons of the Angevin party, following the tide of fortune, went over to his standards, and opened to him the gates of Naples. Louis, who was absent with his French forces at Tarento, despairing of the successful prosecution of the contest, indulged the natural inactivity of his temper; and collecting his native followers, he retired by sea to his Provençal dominions, and finally abandoned the kingdom of Naples. Ladislaus, having thus triumphed over his sluggish antagonist, had leisure to consolidate his stern authority over the licentious and turbulent feudal aristocracy of his kingdom. His energetic talents, and ambitious, fearless spirit, perfectly qualified him for his station; and he soon made it manifest that he designed to rule his disorderly nobles with a sceptre of iron. Regardless of good faith, of mercy, and even of the dictates of gratitude, where these interfered with his ambition, he persecuted, he ruined, he put to death the barons of the Angevin party,

His final establishment on the throne.

1399

people: "Count Andrea, you are to esteem yourself the most fortunate cavalier of this kingdom; for you are about to receive for your mistress the lawful wife of your liege."

notwithstanding their voluntary submission to his authority. He thus crushed the Sanseverini and other great families, whose power might make them dangerous; and having rooted out the seeds of all resistance to his sway in his own dominions, he prepared to direct his vigorous ambition to schemes of foreign conquest. *

* For this sketch of the history of Naples, 1350—1400, my authorities are Matteo Villani, parts of bb. iv. and v. for the first years; and Giannone, Istoria civile del Regno di Napoli, b. xxiii. c. 2. ad fin. and b. xxiv. ad c. v. (vol. iii. p. 388.) I do not quote, although I have consulted, Costanzo; for Giannone has copied that writer so closely, that his own work almost embraces the whole text of the earlier historian of Naples. The principal merit, because the originality, of Giannone must be sought in his admirable elucidation of the legal and ecclesiastical history of his country.

END OF THE FIRST VOLUME.

Printed by R. Gilbert, St. John's Square, London.

WORKS

LATELY PUBLISHED BY

G. B. WHITTAKER, LONDON.

1.

The HISTORY of PARIS, from the earliest Period to the present Day: containing a Description of its Antiquities, Public Buildings, Civil, Religious, Scientific, and Commercial Institutions; with numerous Historical Facts and Anecdotes, hitherto unpublished, tending to illustrate the different Eras of French History, particularly the eventful Period of the Revolution. To which is added, an Appendix, containing a Notice of the Church of St. Denis, an Account of the Violation of the Royal Tombs, important Statistical Tables derived from official Resources, &c. &c. In 3 Vols. 8vo. 2*l.* 2*s.* boards.

2.

VENICE under the YOKE of FRANCE and of AUSTRIA: with Memoirs of the Courts, Governments, and People of ITALY; presenting a faithful Picture of her present Condition, and including original Anecdotes of the Buonaparte Family. By a LADY OF RANK. Written during a Twenty Years' Residence in that interesting Country; and now published for the Information of Englishmen in general, and of Travellers in particular. Dedicated to the Noblemen and Gentlemen, the Members of the Club, entitled "The Travellers' Society." In 2 Vols. 8vo. 21*s.*

3.

NARRATIVE of a SECOND VISIT to GREECE; including Facts and Anecdotes relative to the last Days of Lord Byron, with Extracts from his Correspondence with the Provisional Government, Official Documents, &c. By E. BLAQUIERE, Esq. 8vo. 12*s.* boards.

Also, by the same Author,

The GREEK REVOLUTION; its Origin and Progress: together with some Remarks on the Religion, National Character, &c. in Greece. 8vo. With a large Map. 12*s.* boards.

An HISTORICAL REVIEW of the SPANISH REVOLUTION, in one thick Volume, 8vo. With a Map. 18*s.* boards.

4.

MARIAMNE, an Historical Novel of Palestine. 3 Volumes, 12mo. 18*s.* boards.

5.

TALES of ARDENNES. By H. DERWENT CONWAY. Small 8vo. 8*s.* boards.

00036337

Digitized with financial assistance from the
Government of Maharashtra
on 16 January, 2016